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# WILD WEST



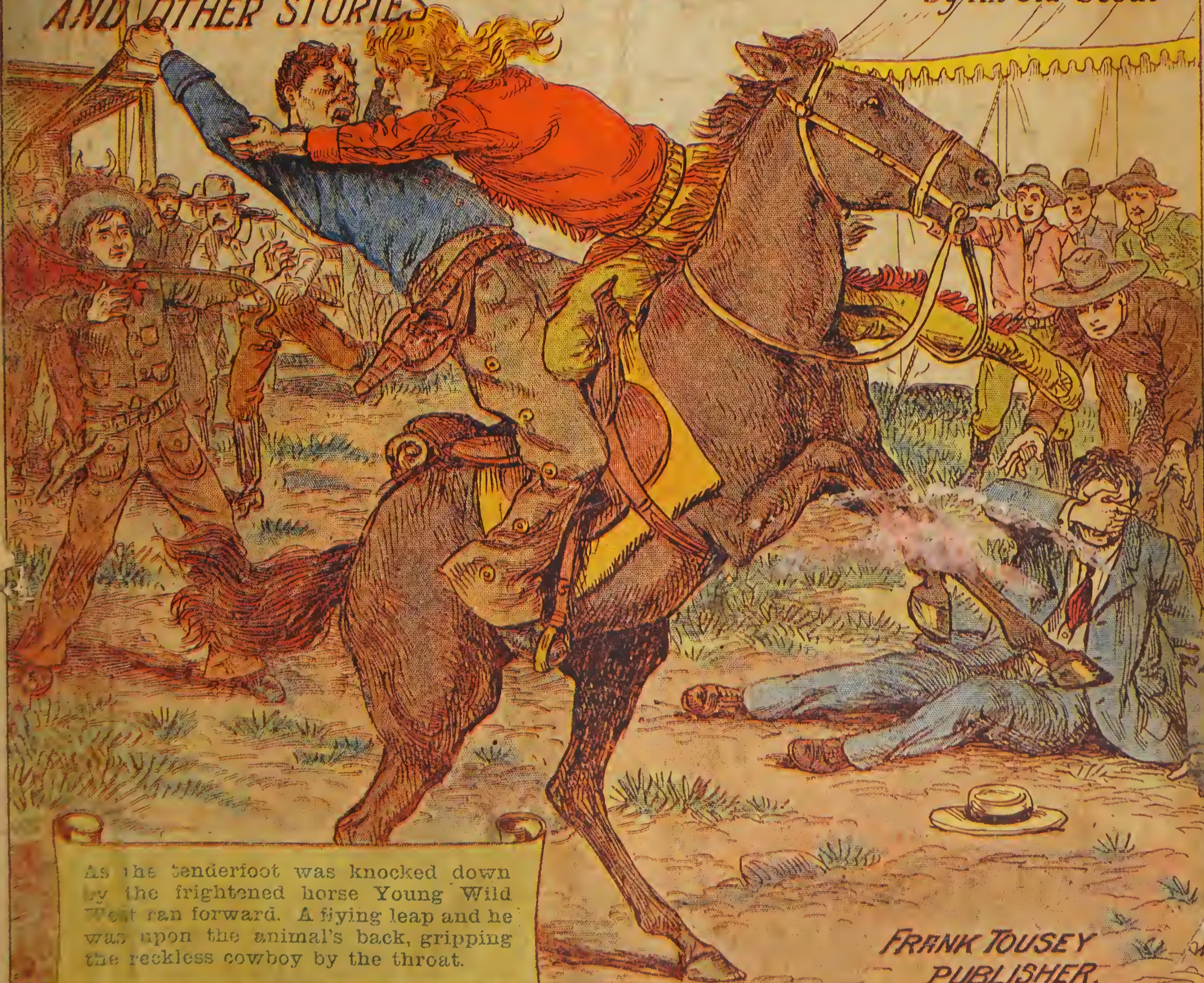
## WEEKLY.

### YOUNG WILD WEST OR THE LIVELIEST TIME ON RECORD

### AT ACE HIGH FAIR

AND OTHER STORIES

By An Old Scout



As the tenderfoot was knocked down by the frightened horse Young Wild West ran forward. A flying leap and he was upon the animal's back, gripping the reckless cowboy by the throat.

FRANK TOUSEY  
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# WILD WEST WEEKLY

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## YOUNG WILD WEST AT ACE HIGH FAIR

OR,

### THE LIVELIEST TIME ON RECORD

By AN OLD SCOUT

#### CHAPTER I.

##### ON THE WAY TO ACE HIGH.

"Great gimlets! What do you think of that, Wild?"

"Looks as though there might be a circus or a fair going on over there, Charlie."

"I reckon it does. But it ain't a circus. It's a fair, all right—the kind we used to have in old Cheyenne once in a while. I reckon we're in luck, 'cause we'll have a lively time, as sure as you're born."

It was Cheyenne Charlie, the well-known scout and Indian fighter, who had spoken first, and his remarks were addressed to Young Wild West, the Boy Hero and Champion Deadshot of the West.

The two had just reached the top of a high rise on the mountain trail that led through the extreme southeastern part of Colorado, when their attention was called to a settlement or village something like two or three miles to the right of them on an almost level plain.

Right close to the collection of houses and small shanties a big tent and several smaller ones were pitched.

Flags were flying and quite a few people could be seen moving about.

The young deadshot and the scout brought their horses to a halt and looked at the scene while waiting for their companions to come on.

It was not long before they were joined by Jim Dart, who, with Cheyenne Charlie, constituted the partners of Young Wild West.

Close behind him came the girls, as we must call them, who were Arietta Murdock, the golden-haired sweetheart of our hero; Anna, the wife of the scout, and Eloise Gardner, Jim Dart's sweetheart.

Somewhat back in the rear two Chinamen came riding up, leading two pack-horses behind them, which were laden with the camping outfit and supplies our friends carried with them on their adventurous trips throughout the wildest parts of the West, which at the time of which we write was in a far less settled condition than at present.

"What are you fellows looking at?" Jim Dart asked, somewhat surprised, when he saw that the attention of Wild and Charlie was attracted strongly.

"I reckon there's a fair going on over there, Jim," the young deadshot answered, as he turned and nodded his head.

"A fair, eh? What place is this, anyhow?"

"I'm sure I don't know. I haven't been within a hundred miles of this place since I was a small kid. It may be that the town over there is but a new one. It strikes me that some of the houses look that way."

"What is it, Wild?" a girlish voice asked, and then charming

Arietta rode up on her cream-white broncho and came to a halt at her dashing young lover's side.

"See for yourself, Et," was the reply. "I reckon we haven't been following a rough mountain trail for two days without meeting any one for nothing. Here's a chance for us to have a little amusement, and at the same time take a rest for a day. I had no idea that we were going to strike civilization so soon when we struck out about an hour ago. If we had known there was a settlement or town so close by we might have reached there last night."

"Well, it matters little, Wild," the girl answered, with a laugh. "We'll go there now, and if there is any amusement to be found there I'm sure we'll take the full benefit of it."

"We surely will, Arietta," the scout's wife spoke up, smiling delightedly. "I've attended quite a few fairs in different parts of the country, and I will say that I always enjoyed them."

"I can say the same thing," Eloise Gardner declared. "I wonder if they will have a balloon ascension?"

"Balloon ascension?" cried Cheyenne Charlie, looking at her in surprise. "Where in thunder would they git a balloon from away out here?"

"Well, I didn't know," the girl answered, smilingly. "Where I was born nearly every fair I ever attended had a balloon ascension."

"Yes, but that was 'way East, in Minnesota, wasn't it?"

"They don't call it East there, Charlie."

"They don't, eh? Well, I do. Anywhere the other side of these here mountains is East, an' don't you forgit it."

"If that's the case, Charlie," said Young Wild West, a twinkle in his eyes, "we are on the east side of the main range."

"That's all right, Wild. I meant to say that anything east of Colorado is East. I reckon that's enough, ain't it?"

"Yes, that will do, Charlie. But let's go on. Perhaps we'll strike a road pretty soon that will take us directly to this little town. The trail we have been following certainly doesn't appear as though it might lead to a place where there are so many people living as this."

"I reckon not," and the scout grinned. "I'd like to see a light wagon drivin' along the road we've come over since we broke camp this mornin'. Why, we had to let the horses walk a big part of the way, 'cause it was so blamed rocky that they couldn't be sure-footed."

As they started to go ahead one of the Chinamen left the pack-horse he had been leading in charge of the other and cantered up close to Young Wild West and the others.

"Um fair over lere, Mislér Wild?" he said, questioningly.

"I reckon so, Hop."

"Me velly glad. Me likee um fair."

"Is that so, Hop?"

"Yes; havee velly muchee fun, so be."



"I suppose so. Perhaps you may learn something new if you watch everything that takes place over there."

"Lat light, Misler Wild. Me lookee velly muchee sharp, so be. Me velly smartee Chinee. Me be velly glad if me finde anything new, so be."

"See here, heathen," Cheyenne Charlie spoke up, tartly, "how many times have I told you not to be braggin' about yourself? Any one that knows yer at all knows that you're mighty smart. But that don't say that you have got to keep sayin' it all the time. When a man is tellin' you how smart he is every now an' then he's braggin', an' I do hate to hear any one braggin'."

"Allee light, Misler Charlie. Me no say lat some more. Me velly smartee Chinee, and me no helpee. Me——"

"There you go ag'in, heathen! Now, then, you jest say that ag'in an' blamed if I don't clip off a couple of inches of your pigtail. I've threatened to do it about a thousand times, but this time I mean business."

This had the effect of silencing the Chinaman, who, we might as well state right here, was known as Young Wild West's clever Chinee, and bore the name of Hop Wah.

The other Chinaman, by the way, was his brother, Wing Wah, who was the cook for the party.

Hop was employed as a sort of handy man, but he was kept probably because he had been of very valuable service to Young Wild West and his friends, and also was able to amuse them while in camp, since he was a very clever sleight-of-hand performer and a practical joker.

The cook was a quiet sort of Celestial, and held his position because he always attended to his own business and did what was required of him faithfully and well.

In their rather picturesque hunting and riding costumes, Young Wild West and his partners and the girls made a pleasing appearance, as they rode along down the slope toward the great plain that lay below.

When they had continued on for perhaps half a mile they suddenly came to quite a decent road that crossed the trail and headed straight for the settlement and fair grounds.

Nailed to a big tree was a piece of board upon which was painted, rather crudely:

"Two and a half miles to Ace High."

An arrow-head pointed to the right, so our friends now knew the name of the place they had sighted from the top of the hill.

"Ace High, eh?" our hero said, shaking his head and smiling. "That sounds more like a mining camp. But it certainly isn't a mining camp, for it seems to be right in a ranching or farming district. Anyhow, there's nothing in a name. They can call it Ace High or Deuce Low, if they like. It matters little to us."

"Um acee high flushee, allee light, Misler Wild," Hop Wah, the clever Chinee spoke up, for he was quite close enough to hear what was said.

"I suppose you know all about that, Hop," was the reply. "But you had better be careful when we get to this place, for there are always professional gamblers hanging around fairs. You might meet with some one who will relieve you of all your cash."

"Lat allee light, Misler Wild. Me no 'flaid. Me play dlaw pokee with evelybody. Me no losee my money. Me velly smartee Chinee."

"There it goes ag'in!" exclaimed the scout, pulling a revolver with lightning-like quickness. "Here's where your pigtail goes, heathen."

Crack!

He fired so quickly that it was a surprise to every one, and those who happened to be looking the right way saw a few hairs fly from the end of the Chinaman's queue, which was hanging down over his back.

"Hip hi! Whatttee mattee?" Hop Wah shouted, excitedly. "Stoppe lat, Misler Charlie!"

"All right," was the reply, while a grim smile showed on the tanned face of the scout. "Maybe that will make yer understand that you have got to stop tellin' about your bein' smart."

The rest could not help laughing, for they knew the Chinaman had been in no danger.

Cheyenne Charlie could shoot quick and straight, though, of course, he was not on the same footing with Young Wild West, who had won the title of Champion Deadshot of the West.

Then, again, Charlie really thought a whole lot of Hop, though they very often picked at each other.

If the Chinaman got into trouble Charlie was one of the

first to go to his assistance, and if it happened the other way, Hop would risk his life to save the scout, so it was merely what might be called rough horse-play, after all.

After making sure that he had not lost much of his queue, if any at all, Hop remained at a halt until his brother came up, and then taking charge of the pack-horses, he followed the others along the decent trail they had struck.

The party had not gone more than a mile before the clatter of hoofs sounded behind them.

As they were proceeding at a rather easy gait, it was quite possible for them to be overtaken by any one who was riding fast.

"Somebody on their way to the fair, I reckon, Wild," the scout said, as he looked over his shoulder and saw a cloud of dust behind them.

"Yes, Charlie, most likely cowboys. I suppose there will be a big bunch of them here. I wonder how long the fair has been going on? Sometimes they last for a week, you know."

"This is Wednesday, Wild," Arietta spoke up, "so the chances are this is not the last day. It will probably wind up on Saturday."

"That's right, little girl. I never thought of that. But it makes little difference. We are in time, anyhow, even if this is the last day of it. We are going to take in Ace High fair, all right, and if we don't have a lively time I'll miss my guess."

Just then the dust behind them cleared slightly and they saw a number of cowboys riding furiously toward them.

The road was not very wide, so they pushed slightly to the left to give them a chance to pass.

Up came the riders with a jingle and clatter, and they all reined in their steeds when they reached the party.

"Hello, strangers!" one of them called out, good-naturedly. "Headin' for the fair, eh?"

"That's right," Young Wild West answered, with a nod of his head. "I suppose that's where you fellows are going?"

"You bet we are! We started out at twelve o'clock last night, an' we've been ridin' mighty hard. Couldn't git off the day afore, so we've missed a day. The boss paid us off an' we're goin' to have a high old time at Ace High, you kin bet. It's the first fair that's ever been held in these here parts, an' every one for a hundred miles around is goin' to try to make it a rouser. It's advertised at every ranch an' along all the trails, so afore Saturday, when the fair closes, there oughter be as many as five or six hundred people here. You know what that means. Five or six hundred people, with from fifty to a hundred dollars apiece, will make a heap of money, an' there'll be lots of fun while that money's bein' spent. I've got sixty-seven dollars, an' I don't expect to go back with a cent. I'm out for a good time, an' so is the rest of the boys. Tanglefoot, dancin' an' high jinks, that's our aim, an' if we don't hit the mark no crowd from any other ranch will. We're from the Double L Ranch, an' I'm the foreman. My name is Bob Sweet."

The cowboy rattled this off in a way that told how glib-tongued he was.

But it was all done very good-naturedly, and as our hero sized him up he made up his mind that he was a pretty good sort of fellow.

The rest, numbering seven men, appeared to be the same way, for they all showed the utmost respect for the ladies.

"We're all glad to meet you, I'm sure, Bob Sweet," the young deadshot said, in his cool and easy way. "I suppose it will be in order for me to introduce myself. My name is Young Wild West."

"Wow!" exclaimed the cowboy foreman, and then he turned quickly to his companions. "Did you hear that, boys? I sorter knowed it when I seen the long hair hangin' down over the boy's shoulders. Then, ag'in, about every one what's heard of a good horse has heard of the sorrel stallion which Young Wild West always rides. It's him, sure enough, boys; an' his two pards, Cheyenne Charlie an' Jim Dart, is with him, to say nothin' of the gals an' the two heathens. Let's give 'em a little old-fashioned cheer sich as only the boys from the Double L kin do. Now, then!"

He waved his hat to keep time, and all eight of the men cheered vociferously.

"They sorter seem to know us all right, Wild," the scout observed, when the cheering had subsided. "I reckon it ain't necessary to have any further introduction. They seem to be a putty good lot of fellers, too."

"Just what I was thinkin', Charlie," the young deadshot answered. "Well, if they don't ride too fast we'll go on with them to Ace High."

"Ride too fast!" spoke up Bob Sweet, the foreman, who over-



heard the words. "I reckon not. We're mighty proud to ride into town with sich folks as you are. Say, I'll bet you're goin' to the fair to take part in the shootin'-match."

"Is there to be a shooting-match there?" our hero asked, smilingly.

"Why, certainly. You never heard tell of a fair that didn't have a shootin'-match of some kind afore it was through. Most likely there'll be a whole lot of 'em afore Saturday night. But what I mean is there's goin' to be a shootin'-match to-day, an' big prizes is to be given to them that earns first, second an' third."

"I'm glad to hear that. But I assure you that we knew nothing about the fair until we saw the tents pitched over on the outskirts of the town. We were following the trail that runs along the side of the mountain, and when we got to the rise half a mile back from where we struck this road we came upon the scene. It was a surprise to us, but as we had nothing particular in view, we decided to go over and take it in."

"Good enough! But I'll bet you'll go in the shootin'-match, all right, Young Wild West. You'll win the first prize, too. Your name has spread all over the country as bein' the boss of all the deadshots."

"That's all right," and our hero smiled. "Don't make any flattering remarks. Just because I took a notion to learn how to handle a gun when I was a very small kid, and have managed to be able to succeed pretty well, don't say that I am the boss of all the deadshots. I'll admit I have won quite a few prizes at shooting-matches, and also that I can handle a gun pretty well. I can do something with a rifle, too, but I am not the only one. Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart are pretty good shots, too, and there's Miss Murdock. I hardly think there's a girl in the whole West who can quite equal her at shooting."

"Oh, we've heard of her, too. Arietta is what you call her, ain't it?"

"Yes, you have got that right, Bob."

"An' she's only a slip of a gal, too. But Western gals is all right. Most of 'em knows how to handle a gun, an' it's a mighty good thing they do sometimes."

They were all still at a halt, and just as they were about to start on for Ace High hoofbeats sounded behind them.

"More headin' for the fair, I reckon," Cheyenne Charlie observed, as he looked back and shaded his eyes with his hand.

"Yes, an' I'll bet I know who they are," Bob Sweet answered, a stern expression suddenly coming over his face. "Most likely it's the gang from Marker's Ranch. A mighty rough lot they are, too, an' Speckled Dick, the foreman, has the name of bein' the most dangerous man in four counties. If it's them what's comin' you had better sorter look out for 'em, 'cause they're liable to insult the gals. That's jest their way. We ain't afraid of 'em, of course. But we allowed when we started out that we didn't want to git in any trouble with Marker's gang unless they forced us to do it."

"All right, Bob," the young deadshot answered, coolly. "You fellows needn't say a word. If it's Marker's gang, as you think, I reckon we'll attend to them, if they get too fresh."

The party of horsemen were now in plain sight.

There were nine of them, as our friends could count, and as they drew a little closer, Bob Sweet nodded to our hero and said:

"It's them, sure enough."

## CHAPTER II.

### SURPRISING THE COWBOYS FROM MARKER'S RANCH.

Up rode the nine horsemen in a decidedly reckless fashion, and as they brought their bronchos to a halt they raised a cloud of dust, which swept over our friends and the cowboys, who had moved away sufficiently to permit them to pass.

"Hello! What's all this mean?" a man conspicuous in a bright red shirt called out, as he glanced over the group. "Boys, I reckon here's some of the fair people. Most likely they're goin' to give a show there."

This was meant for Young Wild West and his friends, of course, and as the speaker said the last he was looking straight at the girls.

No one said a word, and, with a jeering laugh, the horseman rode up close to Arietta and called out:

"Hello, sis! You look as purty as one of them dolls I seen in a store when I was in Santa Fe. Got a kiss for a good-lookin' cowboy?"

He leaned toward her and thrust out his tongue in a very insulting way, and the next thing he knew he received a resounding slap in the face.

"That's the way to do it, Et," Young Wild West said, coolly, though there was a flash in his eyes that told how ready he was to thrash the insulting fellow.

"Thunder!" one of the cowboys exclaimed. "That's the time Speckled Dick got it, boys. That gal is a regular tarantula."

"Shet up!" cried the insulting fellow, as he brushed his cheek as though to wipe away the sting of the slap. "That shows the gal's all right. I wouldn't give a blame for a gal who wasn't spunky. She's one of them show folks, an' you kin bet on it. They always do that at the start. But after she's got good an' acquainted with me it will be different."

"Go on about your business," Young Wild West's sweetheart said, quite coolly, and then she suddenly drew a revolver and pointed it at the man's breast. "Get a move on you. If you don't hurry I'll put a builet through you."

"Whoopee! whoopee! Wow! wow! wow!" shouted Cheyenne Charlie, who was now bristling with anger. "Shoot him, anyhow, Arietta. The sneakin' coyote is deservin' of it."

"Easy, Charlie," cautioned our hero, who was apparently quite at his ease. "I reckon Arietta can take care of that fellow. When she gets through with him I'll take a hand in the game."

"You'll take a hand," spoke up one of the others, who was a stocky young man having a very crooked nose and a jaw that resembled that of a bulldog. "I reckon no kid kin handle me, let alone Speckled Dick, the best deadshot in four counties."

Without attempting to pull a gun, Wild rode up alongside the speaker and then, as quick as lightning, reached out and caught him by the nose and gave it a twist.

"I'll try and straighten up your face a little, my friend," the boy said, and then he gave an extra yank, which caused the cowboy to actually lose his balance and fall to the ground.

Instantly there was a great commotion, the cowboys from the Double L Ranch taking part in it.

Revolvers flashed in the sunlight, and it looked as though there was going to be a genuine shooting-match right there on the trail.

But Young Wild West quickly held up his hand and, turning to Cheyenne Charlie, said:

"I told you to take it easy, Charlie. Just see to it that all our friends put away their guns. There isn't going to be a great deal of trouble here, and you can bet on it. These fellows are quite harmless, I think. They feel in a joking humor, probably, and have made a mistake by going a little too far. They will soon be ready to apologize and go on about their business, I reckon."

The words of the boy had more effect upon the newcomers than a shot from a revolver would have had.

Two of them quickly dropped their guns back into the holsters, and the others sat on their horses in a hesitating sort of way.

The leader, who was Speckled Dick, the foreman of Marker's Ranch, as Bob Sweet had said, acted as though he was thunderstruck.

He had not attempted to draw a weapon, but sat in the saddle looking alternately from Arietta to Wild.

There was reason for his not attempting to pull a gun, for Arietta still had him covered.

"Gal," said he, speaking with an effort, "you sartinly wouldn't put a bullet through me, would yer?"

"I am not going to wait more than a few seconds longer," she answered, coolly. "If you don't move, my finger certainly will, and when it does this gun will go off."

"I reckon I'll move, then. I made up my mind to see what's goin' on at the Ace High fair, an' I don't want to die afore I git there. But I'll see you ag'in, sis. You're the purtiest little piece of calico I ever sot eyes on. You don't mind tellin' me what part you're goin' to take in the show, do you?"

"Go on!" the girl cried, her eyes flashing, and she pushed the muzzle of her revolver a few inches closer to him.

"All right, sis, I'm goin'."

Then he promptly started his horse away at a walk, at the same time turning his head toward his companions.

"Don't be in a hurry, stranger," Young Wild West said, and knowing that Charlie and Jim had the drop on the fellow he had forced from the back of his horse, he rode up and took the fellow by the shoulder.

"What do you want, kid?" was the gruff retort.

"I want you to get down off your horse, so I can teach you some manners. Now, then, dismount instantly, or I'll knock you down!"

The villain, for such he undoubtedly was, flashed a glance in the direction of Arietta, and seeing that she still held the



revolver in her hand, he shrugged his shoulders and then tried to appear very cool.

"You want me to git down off my horse so you kin thrash me, eh? Why, kid, what are you talkin' about? You seem to have about as much spunk as the gal has. You couldn't lick one side of me, so you had better change your mind. I'm sorry I said anything to the gal to make you mad. I kin see now that she's your sweetheart. But gals was made to be talked to by men an' boys. I'm only a boy myself, 'cause I ain't much more than twenty-four. But I want you to know right now that I'm Speckled Dick, the foreman of Marker's Ranch, an' that I kin outshoot any one in four counties, an' I've never been licked in my life by a man, let alone a kid like you."

"I reckon you have struck the wrong party this time, Speck," Bob Sweet called out, a ring of sarcasm in his voice. "That's Young Wild West, the Champion Deadshot. He's only a kid, as you say, but from what I've heard tell of him a feller like you wouldn't be much to handle. Maybe you kin boss ordinary fellers around a whole lot, but you ain't goin' to do it now. As far as I'm concerned I never was afraid of yer, an' I ain't now. But I'm one of the kind of boys what thinks it's best to go along, smooth-like, an' that's why I've kept out of your way a whole lot. You're up ag'in it now, so git down on the ground an' let Young Wild West give yer a good lickin'. I'll clap my hands when he does it, too, an' after that, if you think you kin outshoot me you're welcome to start in. This has been comin' a long time, an' I s'pose it may as well happen right now."

"Boys, are you goin' to sit there an' hear Bob Sweet talk like that?" ventured Speckled Dick, just as though our hero was entirely out of the question, and it was only the foreman of the Double L he had to contend with. "You know as well as I do that the boys belongin' to the Double L are a lot of lame coyotes, an' that they ain't got enough sand in 'em to put grit in a piece of friend bacon. Never mind these show people. Jest light into 'em an' clean 'em up. That's what I say."

Again revolvers flashed, but once more Young Wild West was equal to the occasion.

"Put away your hardware!" he cried, as his own revolver flashed in his hand. "I'll drop the first man who attempts to pull a trigger."

The man with the crooked nose was standing by his horse, and he alone acted as though he was not ready to do any fighting.

While his nasal organ had been bent back into proper shape by the twist our hero gave it, it, of course, had returned to its former position.

It was very red, however, and must have pained him somewhat.

"Go on, Dick," he said, as he nodded to the leader of the crowd. "We'll wait till later on. I reckon we kin bust up any fair that ever started when we git goin'. As far as them from the Double L is concerned, we kin lick them any time, an' they know it. Bob Sweet is talkin' mighty loud jest now, 'cause he thinks he's got somebody here to help him. If it's Young Wild West, as he says it is, we've made a little mistake. But mistakes kin easily be rectified, as I was taught when I went to school."

"There's a lot of wisdom in what you say," our hero said, in a taunting way. "But Speckled Dick isn't going on until I have thrashed him. Now, then, he's going to get right off that horse in a hurry."

Wild certainly meant to force the man to dismount, but he did not have to do so, for Speckled Dick quickly threw his leg over and dropped lightly to the ground.

He had scarcely landed when the young deadshot leaped down and stood directly before him.

"I can see why they call you Speckled Dick," the boy said, coolly. "You have got a few freckles on your face. I suppose they have been there since your early boyhood. But that don't make you any the worse. I have known lots of men and boys in my time who had freckles, and they were more good ones than bad. But you're certainly a rascal, and you have an idea that you can boss every one you meet. I reckon you have made the mistake of your life now. Put up your hands, for I am going to punch you squarely on your nose."

Then the young deadshot dropped his revolver back into the holster and, with his left fist, hit the fellow exactly where he told him he would.

It was not exactly a hard blow, but it was quite sufficient to draw blood, and as the fellow staggered back he let out a roar of anger that could have been heard half a mile.

"Give it to him, Wild!" Arietta exclaimed, her eyes flashing. "He's the most insulting rascal I've seen in a long time."

"And the first galoot as attempts to interfere will drop dead," Cheyenne Charlie added, as he waved a revolver back and forth before the faces of the men from Marker's Ranch.

The fellow with the crooked nose placed his foot in the stirrup and quickly got upon the back of his horse.

"If you have got to fight, go ahead an' do it, Dick," he called out. "I ain't goin' to fight, that's sartin. They've got us dead to rights, so what's the use?"

But Speckled Dick paid no attention to the remark.

There was a tree pretty close at the side of the road, and he suddenly made a move as though to get behind it.

But he was not quick enough.

Young Wild West knew what he intended to do, and he leaped forward and caught him by the collar of the shirt.

"None of that!" the boy exclaimed. "If you would rather fight with guns come over here so no one will be apt to get shot, and we'll have it out. I understand that you are pretty quick on the shoot."

"I reckon I'm quick enough if I have got fair play," was the reply, as the fellow wiped his bleeding nose with the sleeve of his shirt. "I'm game, I am. Come on. I don't care whether you're Young Wild West or not. I've heard somethin' about yer, if you are Young Wild West, but you can't scare me. I never heard tell of a kid bein' able to outshoot a man like me."

"All right, don't get excited over it. But come on. I'm willing to take the chances of being shot, and if you are it's easily settled. Just come down here a few paces and then we'll see about it."

Wild started along the road toward a point which was only a short distance away, and Speckled Dick followed him, walking rather slowly.

But he had not gone more than a dozen steps before he stopped, and turning to his companions, called out:

"Come on, boys, an' fetch my pony."

"No, you don't!" our hero exclaimed, in a voice that told plainly how determined he was to give the villain what he deserved. "We are going to shoot it out or else you are going to take a thrashing."

"I'll shoot it out with yer some other time, but not now. I'll make an agreement with yer that when we meet over in Ace High we'll shoot on sight. How does that strike yer, kid?"

"That doesn't suit me at all. We'll do it right now. You're going to have a square show. We'll step a little further along in the road and turn back to back. Then we'll walk ten paces, each one counting for himself, and turn and shoot. That's fair, isn't it?"

"Go ahead an' do it, Dick," the crooked-nosed man called out. "That's jest your game. He sartinly can't turn any quicker than you can, an' when you pull a trigger somethin' will drop."

"Who's doin' this?" the foreman asked, sharply. "You keep your mouth shut, Nosey."

"All right. But I'm mighty surprised at yer, an' I can't help sayin' it. The rest of the boys is, too. I kin tell by the way they're actin'."

"They'll be a lot more surprised afore they're through; an' you kin bet on it," Cheyenne Charlie spoke up, with a mocking laugh.

Speckled Dick did not move a step further, but again wiped his bleeding nose, this time with a new bandana handkerchief.

Satisfied that he did not have enough sand in him to settle it by shooting, the young deadshot walked over to him and, seizing him by the shirt-collar, gave him a shake and then a sudden push, which caused him to reel backward and stumble over an obstruction at the side of the roadway.

Flat on his back he went, his heels flying in the air, while Arietta clapped her hands and the cowboys from the Double L jeered loudly.

"Ain't yer satisfied, kid?" Speckled Dick asked, as he half arose and looked around in a frightened way.

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Wild, disgustedly. "You're the worst coward I've met in a long time. You talk about being the best deadshot of four counties, and all that. Why, you're nothing but a measly coyote. Get on your nag and light out. I don't want anything more to do with you."

The rascally foreman's face lighted up for an instant, and he turned and actually ran to his horse.

He mounted with alacrity, and quickly went galloping down the road toward the settlement.

"Kin we go now?" Nosey asked, rather politely.

"Yes, go on, and see how fast you can travel, too," the



young deadshot answered, as he once more drew a gun from the holster.

Away they went at a gallop, and when they were perhaps twenty yards from the spot, Wild raised his gun and pulled the trigger.

Crack!

As the report rang out, Nosey's hat flew from his head.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Cheyenne Charlie, derisively. "If that ain't the biggest bunch of cowards I've ever seen I'll never take another chaw of tobacco in my life. Whoopee! whoopee! Wow! wow! wow! Yip! yip! yip! Go it, you sneakin' coyotes!"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Bob Sweet, when the rascally cowboys were lost to view in a cloud of dust. "Who would ever have dreamed of sich a thing as this happenin'! Young Wild West, you're the greatest boy what ever straddled a piece of horseflesh, an' your pards an' the ladies with yer is jest the same. I don't know about the two heathens back there, but blamed if I don't think they would be able to take their part in a fight."

"You bettee you lifee, Misler Melican Man," Hop Wah called out, and then he suddenly exposed to view a big, old-fashioned six-shooter and waved it over his head. "Me shootee allee samee likee Young Wild West. Me velly smartee Chinee."

This put a comical aspect on the proceedings, and it was really a fitting termination of the incident.

The cowboys laughed uproariously, and then they broke into a cheer and waved their hats and caused their horses to prance about in great style.

"It's sorter funny, after all," one of the cowboys declared, and then his face took on a serious expression. "But, just the same, Speckled Dick and the rest of that bunch ain't goin' to let it drop. They'll be ready to shoot on sight, most likely, though, of course, they'll see to it that they don't git the first chance. Young Wild West, you take my advice an' be on the watch for 'em. But we're goin' to stick to yer, as Bob told yer a little while ago. We've kinder steered clear of that bunch, 'cause we didn't want to git into trouble. But that don't mean that we're afraid of 'em. They outnumber us a little, but when it comes to the point we'll sartinly burn a little powder. There's trouble been brewin' between us for a long time, but the boss has advised us to go it easy, an' we've done so. We've got a mighty good boss, an' that's why we've done as he's told us."

"That's all right, my friend," Wild said, smilingly. "I suppose your boss will be at the fair?"

"He's there now. He went over yisterday an' took his wife an' two gals with him. Bob will introduce you when you git there. His name is Dell Murphy, an' he's white, through an' through."

"All right, we'll all be glad to see him, I'm sure. Now, then, I reckon we'll go on to Ace High. We'll take it easy, and by the time we get there I suppose the gang from Marker's Ranch will be ready for us. But we've made up our minds to have a lively time at the Ace High fair, and we are going to do it, even if it starts in with a free fight for all."

### CHAPTER III.

#### AT THE ACE HIGH HOTEL.

Young Wild West and his friends rode along easily with the cowboys, and without being overtaken by any more riders they presently reached the confines of the little town.

It was not very much of a place, and just why it had been selected to hold a fair no one could quite understand.

There was a rather big store where all sorts of supplies could be obtained, a blacksmith shop, tavern and dance-hall, and the rest of the buildings were used solely as residences.

Most of the latter had good-sized plots of ground, and vegetable gardens common to that region were raised.

There had been considerable dry weather in that part of the country, so the rather wide road that ran through the center of the town, forming a street, was very dusty.

But our friends were used to this sort of thing, so they did not mind it very much, but rode on until they came to the tavern, which really was quite a large building.

Men were standing about in groups, and many horses were either hitched or turned loose and grazing upon the patches of grass scattered about here and there among the trees.

A big, old-fashioned pump was directly in front of the tavern, and there was the usual horse-trough, with hitching-posts running nearly the whole length of the open space.

Young Wild West decided that the best thing to do would be to put up at the hotel during their stay at Ace High,

so he promptly dismounted, while those standing about stared at the strangers, no doubt wondering where they had come from and who they were.

Charlie and Jim dismounted also, and they took care to keep a good watch.

So far they had not seen anything of the rascally cowboys who had preceded them, but they expected they might appear at any time, and then there would surely be something in the way of a shooting-match.

"How are you, gentlemen?" our hero said, in his cool and easy way, as he started for the door. "Things seem to be rather lively around here."

"Right yer are, young feller," a tall man, with a long chin-beard, evidently a rancher, answered, as he looked the boy over in a curious sort of way. "It cost a big pile of money to git the fair to come here, but I reckon it's goin' to be a rousin' success. There was more than three hundred people here yisterday, an' they all paid fifty cents a head to git into the ground. I'm one of the managers, so if you're lookin' for any information about the fair I reckon I kin tell yer about it."

"Thank you, I'll have a talk with you presently. We didn't know there was such a thing as a fair going on here, and it was only when we saw the tents that we decided to come over."

"I see. Well, I'll git tickets for yer any time you want 'em."

"All right. I'll take eight tickets right now."

"Good enough!" and the tall man at once ran into the bar-room of the tavern, Wild following him.

The young deadshot looked sharply around as he entered, and when he saw Speckled Dick and his gang sitting around some tables at the further end of the room he was not at all surprised.

They all looked at him, but said nothing, so he stepped to the desk that was near the little bar, with the man, and counted out four dollars, paying for the tickets.

The tickets were obtained from the man behind the desk, and he promptly accepted the money, showing great pleasure in doing so.

"There you are," said the ranchman. "But you must understand that them tickets is only good for to-day."

"That's all right," Wild answered, with a laugh. "If we decide to stay over another day we'll buy more when the time comes."

Then the boy nodded to the clerk and added:

"I suppose we can get dinner and suppeer and perhaps a night's lodging here."

"How many are there of you?"

"Eight, counting the two Chinamen. But they could be stowed in almost anywhere to sleep."

"Well, I'll tell you what I can do," and the clerk looked over a long slip of paper. "If you can bunk into two rooms I can fix you up for to-night. As far as the grub is concerned, that will be all right. We've got no end of tables on hand, because we have been expecting to have a mighty big rush."

"Two good-sized rooms will do, I reckon," Wild said, with a smile. "There are three ladies with us and they can occupy one while I will take the other along with my two partners."

"That's all right, then. We'll find a place for the heathens to sleep. That will make it just one day, and the regular rates of this hotel are five dollars a day for each person. You'll have to pay now, too, young fellow, because that's the way we do business with strangers."

"Very well. You want forty dollars, then. Here you are."

The clerk took the money, and then made an entry on the long slip of paper.

"We ain't got a register," he said, with a grin. "This ain't the first hotel I've worked in, so I know all about such things. But you can tell me your name, if you like, because you're the one that's paying the money."

"My name is Young Wild West."

"What! You don't say!" and the clerk opened wide his eyes in astonishment.

"That's right, my friend."

"Ah! I reckon you have come over here to take part in the contests for prizes at shooting and riding and such."

"No, we really didn't come here for that purpose. As I just told this gentleman standing here, we were not aware that a fair was being held here. We simply saw the tents from a distance, and that enticed us to ride over."

"Well, ain't you the Champion Deadshot of the West?"

"I don't know whether I am or not," and the boy laughed good-naturedly. "I haven't met all the so-called champions yet, so it would be hard to tell about that."

"But you are, though, because I've heard about it. I rather



think there'll be some lively doings at the Ace High fair, since you have come here. Well, I'm mighty glad of it. The cattlemen and other men that's got a little money have chipped in a whole lot to make this fair a big success. People are coming here from miles around, and it ought to be the means of booming Ace High up a little. There ain't a finer place in the world for a man to settle and do farming than right around this section. Of course, there's quite a few ranches here now, and they're all raising mighty fat cattle and getting good prices for 'em. But the soil is mighty rich and farming is beginning to pay, too. Ace High has never been a very likely place, and we're going to try to make it one now."

"How comes it that the town was named Ace High?" Wild asked, as he shot a glance at the rascals at the further end of the room.

"That question has been asked lots of times by strangers, and I'll answer it in a jiffy. A fellow named Riker had an idea that it would pay to start a store here. There's his store right across the street over there. It looks all right, don't it?"

"Yes, quite a store, I must say. He seems to deal in about everything, by the looks of the display he has outside."

"He does, too. Well, Riker's there yet. When he started that store there were only two log cabins here. But he knew it was in about the center of a ranching district, and he was a wise fellow, too. He undertook to call the place Rikersville. But one day Bill Brumm, which is the blacksmith here now, came along and started in business. The first day he got here he asked Riker what was the name of the settlement, and he told him it was Rikersville. 'The place ain't ace high,' said Bill, with a laugh. 'It is ace high,' Riker answered, and he got a little mad about it. Four or five others were standing around at the time and they all took it up right away. 'It is ace high, Bill,' said one of them. 'All right,' the blacksmith said, 'it's Ace High, then.' That settled it, Young Wild West. No one ever called it Rikersville after that, and I rather think that Ace High is just about as good a name as any."

"It surely is," the young deadshot retorted, rather amused at the explanation. "There is nothing in a name, anyhow. It is the place and the people in it that counts."

The clerk seemed to be rather proud of the information he had given, and he came from behind the desk and offered his hand to our hero, who promptly grasped it and gave it a hearty shake.

"Now, then," he observed, "I suppose you want to be showed to your rooms?"

"If it is convenient you might as well do it."

"It's always convenient for me, especially when I can do anything for a person who is as well known as you are. Tom," and he turned to a rather stout man who was behind the bar, "you had better let somebody take care of Young Wild West's horse."

"All right," was the reply. "Jest show them to their rooms, an' I'll see that the horses is looked after."

"Don't bother yourself about that, my friend," Wild said, nodding to the man, who was evidently the proprietor, for he sported a white shirt and had a big diamond showing from its front. "Just show us our rooms and let the horses be where they are until we come back. We generally see to them ourselves."

"Good! I know a lot of people who are the same way, an' I don't blame you, for I've been lookin' at them horses through the window, an' they're as fine a lot as I've ever seen in these parts."

"Fetch the ladies in at the other door," the clerk said. "I'll go on through and meet you in the hall."

Wild went on out, still keeping an eye on the villains at the tables.

But none of them seemed to be in a fighting mood just then and not a word was said.

He went outside, Charlie and Jim, who had been standing in the doorway, stepping aside to let him pass.

"Come on, girls," he called out. "We are to be shown to the rooms. I have engaged board for a day here. We are to have dinner and supper and stop over night, and then, after breakfast, if we have had enough of the Ace High fair we'll go on about our business."

The girls had already dismounted, and leaving the two Chinamen in charge of the horses, they all went in by the hotel entrance and found the clerk waiting for them in the hall.

He promptly conducted them upstairs and showed them two of the best rooms in the house.

"Here you are," he said. "I think you can manage to make out all right. There's two beds in a room, but there's three

of you to use them. I'll leave it to you to fix matters up to suit you. If you'll just wait about five minutes I'll have some water sent up to each room. You can see we've got china wash-bowls here, which shows that we ain't altogether behind the age. If you was stopping at a ranch or some other place along the trail you would have to go around to the back of the house and use tin basins to wash in. But the Ace High Hotel don't do business that way."

"You certainly are very much up-to-date," Wild declared, a twinkle in his eyes. "I'm sure we appreciate it all, and you'll find us very orderly guests. Of course," he added, "there are some people in the barroom who promised to shoot me on sight. They didn't do it, though, so probably they have changed their minds."

"What's that?" the clerk asked, in surprise.

"I suppose you know those fellows from Marker's Ranch, don't you?"

"Yes, I know 'em, and I don't think an awful lot of 'em," and the clerk's eyes flashed. "They're a mighty bad lot. I was expecting Speckled Dick, the foreman of the gang, to say something, because he always does when he sees strangers come around."

"Probably he had good reasons for not saying anything. I gave Speckled Dick a thrashing shortly before we reached the town."

Again the clerk expressed astonishment.

"You thrashed Speckled Dick?" he asked, after a pause.

"Something like that. He wouldn't fight, that was the trouble. There's a fellow in there with a crooked nose, too. I tried to straighten it for him, but it wouldn't work, for it flew back in the same shape the moment I let go of it."

"Well, well! You don't say!"

Wild was pretty sure the man would tell what he had heard as soon as he got downstairs.

But he did not care.

He was really anxious for the rascally coyotes to start up their game again so he could settle matters as quickly as possible.

He did not like delays in such matters, for he knew pretty well that Speckled Dick certainly would try to get revenge before the day was over.

The clerk acted as though he would like to talk a little longer, but when Wild and his partners turned to leave the room, so they might see to it that the horses were well taken care of, he followed them without a word.

They went out by the way they had entered and found a hostler standing near the horses and talking to the two Chinamen.

"Young feller," the hostler said, as Wild came up and took Spitfire by the bridle, "I reckon we ain't got enough stalls to put away your horses. But maybe you would rather turn 'em loose into the little corral we've got back here."

"That will be all right," was the reply. "Just show us where it is. We would like to have some place where we can lock up our outfit, though."

"I'll find a place for that. Come right on."

Wild tossed him a silver dollar and he grabbed it eagerly, at the same time bowing his thanks.

Then the horses were led around to the rear of the tavern, where, sure enough, there was an enclosure of about five hundred square feet, the fence being strong and quite high enough to keep the animals from getting out.

The hostler assisted in removing the saddles, and he showed himself quite handy at it.

Then the horses were turned in and the gates shut.

"No," he said, "you kin put your things in the feed-house. You had better hang your saddles and bridles there, too, 'cause you can't tell what might happen. There's always thieves around here, an' any one of 'em might take a notion for a saddle or a bridle."

The feed-house was handy by, and when everything had been placed inside, the hostler snapped the padlock and handed the key to our hero.

"I won't have to go in there ag'in to-day," he said, "'cause I've got enough feed outside to last till to-morrow."

"All right," and the boy put the key in his pocket.

The clerk was standing at the rear door when they started back, and noticing that there was a place to wash themselves close to the kitchen, Cheyenne Charlie called out:

"Say, it will be all right if we wash here, won't it? What's the use of splashin' the water all around in that room upstairs?"

"Suit yourselves," was the quick reply. "I'll see to it that you get some clean towels and fresh soap."



He did this, and all three accepted the opportunity to relieve themselves of the dust of travel.

A whisk-broom was even furnished them, and as the clerk handed it to Wild he said:

"I tell you, we're pretty well up to the times here. It ain't every hotel that has a whisk-broom, I can tell you."

"You seem to be quite a hustler," the young deadshot observed, with a laugh. "I reckon the boss found a good man when he hired you."

"Oh, I'm the boss' son-in-law, and some day I'll have a little interest in this place, maybe."

"Ah, I understand. No wonder, then, that you are so full of business. What is your name?"

"James Merkle, and I'm a hotel man through and through. My father-in-law's name is Tom Roberts. He's a pretty good sort of man, but he never understood much about the business until I taught him a whole lot."

Then the talkative clerk started to tell them just how it was he happened to get acquainted with the boss' daughter, and how, finally, he became a sort of manager.

But they were not willing to listen to all this just then, so made their way around to the front and entered the barroom.

They found the place pretty full now, for since they had taken away the horses there was nothing particular outside to attract the attention of the loiterers.

Speckled Dick and the other cowboys belonging to Marker's ranch were clustered near the bar now, and they were talking and laughing as they smoked and drank.

The boss had more than he could do to wait upon the customers, so James Merkle, the clerk, rolled up the sleeves of the black alpaca coat he wore and got behind the bar to help him.

"What can I do for you, Young Wild West?" he asked, ignoring the others who were calling out for drinks.

"A little ginger-pop for me," Wild answered, in his cool and easy way.

"Me, too," Jim Dart hastened to say.

"Reckon I'll take the same, but you kin put a few drops of tanglefoot in it, jest to temper it into right shape," the scout added.

"Me takee lillee tanglefoot, so be. Me wantee um tanglefoot stlaight."

The voice came from behind them, and there stood Hop Wah, bowing and smiling.

In spite of the protestations of the cowboys and others who were clamoring for drinks, the clerk served our friends first.

One cowboy, who seemed to be a clumsy, good-natured sort of fellow, but did not seem to like to see a Chinaman served ahead of him, stepped over and knocked the glass from Hop's hand just as he was about to place it to his lips.

"No Chinees don't drink ahead of me," he said. "I ain't lookin' for no row, 'cause I ain't that kind of a galoot. But I reckon we've got to draw the line somewhere."

"Whatee mattee?" Hop asked, faintly. "You allee samee Melican fool."

"That's all right, heathen. But after I drink you kin have yours. I asked for a drink afore you come in here, an' I can't seem to git it."

"Here you are, Jake," the boss called out. "I'll wait on you. You must make a little allowance when there's a rush here. You seem to forgit that we've got a fair in Ace High, an' that means that we can't do business jest as we want to. These people is guests of the hotel, an' if Merkle wanted to wait on 'em he had a right to do it. Here's your pizen."

"Give me one for the heathen, too, then," the big fellow spoke up. "I didn't mean nothin' by knockin' the glass out of his hand. He's mighty mad, too, I kin see."

"Me no mad, so be," Hop answered, blandly, and he stepped up and received another glass of liquor.

"Why don't you chuck the heathen outside an' have done with it? You act like a big schoolboy!" a voice called out from the further end of the bar.

It was Nosey, one of the cowboys from Marker's Ranch, who spoke.

"Why don't you chuck him out, you sneakin' coyote?" Cheyenne Charlie shouted, angrily. "I'll bet you don't dare to lay hands on him. If you do you'll be the one what will git chucked out."

"Hold on, gentlemen!" cried Tom Roberts, the proprietor. "Don't start any trouble here. I want to see everything pass off nice, 'cause this is the first time we've ever had a fair in Ace High."

As if it had been arranged to start a fight, at this moment the gang from Marker's pulled their guns and started straight toward our friends.

"Stop right where you are!" Young Wild West exclaimed, and in an instant a revolver was in his hand and leveled directly at the breast of the leader. "I've been waiting for this, Speckled Dick. You said it was going to be a case of shoot on sight when we reached the town. I came in here alone, and you fellows were sitting over there at the tables. Not one of you offered to shoot and, of course, I didn't. There are nine of you, and I wasn't afraid to come in alone. Now, then, if you mean to go ahead and settle this business, proceed."

"Stop, gents, stop it!" shouted the proprietor, excitedly. "You'll hurt my business if you start any shootin' in here."

"There won't be much shootin' unless Young Wild West does it," Cheyenne Charlie retorted, with a laugh. "That gang is a lot of lame coyotes, an' it's only a bluff they're putting up. There ain't one of 'em as dares to lift a gun higher than he's got it now. They make out they're goin' to shoot from the hip. There! What did I tell yer? They're puttin' their hardware back."

This was true.

One by one the rascally fellows dropped their guns back into the holsters.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### WILD GIVES A LESSON TO AN ASPIRING DEADSHOT.

There was a deathly silence in the barroom, for those not aware that there had been trouble between Young Wild West and the gang from Marker's Ranch were amazed at what happened so quickly.

But when they saw the boy cow the whole gang, they could not hold themselves in, and the result was that a simultaneous cheer went up.

The big, good-natured looking man who had knocked the glass from Hop's hand ran forward and began dancing right before the Chinaman he had taken exception to but a minute or two before.

"This is what I call the greatest thing what's ever happened," he shouted, waving his hat. "I don't wonder everybody felt like cheerin', an' they did cheer, too, an' don't you forgit it. Everybody let out a yell but Speckled Dick an' his crowd. What's the matter, anyhow? This here boy is as good as gold. Any one kin see that. He's——"

"It's Young Wild West, Bob," the clerk spoke up, proudly. "You have heard of him lots of times."

"Git out!" the big man declared, and then he gripped his long whiskers and twisted them as he looked with wide-open eyes at the young deadshot.

But Wild was not paying any particular attention to him just then.

He knew he had a pretty bad lot to deal with, and he did not take his eyes from their leader.

Though Speckled Dick had been crushed again, it was a pretty sure thing that he was one of the sort who was simply waiting for a good chance.

"Excuse me, my friend," Wild said, pushing the big man aside, "but don't stand in front of me. I want to keep my eyes on the gang who threatened to shoot me on sight. I have got them dead to rights now, but that don't say they are going to remain that way a great while. For the benefit of every one here I want to say that Speckled Dick and his crowd overtook us on the trail a mile or so from here, and that Speckled Dick himself insulted one of the ladies with us. This, of course, started a little trouble, and the result was that they got handled a little roughly. They rode on with the understanding that they were going to do something when we got here. They waited quite a little while before they tried it, but that makes no difference. They'll try it again, I suppose, and they'll find us ready every time they do. We've made up our minds to have a lively time at Ace High fair, and we are going to do it. If any one gets hurt before we go away it will surely be their own fault. Now, then, I hope every one understands us. We didn't come here to make any trouble, and we don't intend to do so. If there is any trouble some one else will make it. But I'll guarantee you that the minute they do they'll find out that they've barked up the wrong tree. I'm only a boy, as you all know, but I reckon I know how to take care of myself. I've got two good partners to back me up, too, and the three of us are willing to go outside and fight it out with the nine rascals who seem to hate us so. How does that strike you?"

"Come on, then!" Speckled Dick shouted, and then he made a dart out of the back door of the room.

His companions hesitated a moment, and then went after him.



"That's all right," Wild called out, in his cool and easy way. "You can go out by the rear and we'll go out at the front. We'll meet you somewhere outside. Come on, boys!"

Out of the front door he leaped, followed by Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart.

Without the least bit of hesitation the three ran around the corner of the house.

Crack!

A shot was fired, but they could not see the person who fired it.

It had come from the opposite corner, but there was no one to be seen.

However, the bullet did not come within ten feet of them.

Wild made a motion to his partners to keep close to the house, and then, without making a sound, he stepped lightly along toward the rear corner, revolver in hand.

When he was within ten feet of it a hand grasping a revolver came slowly around.

Crack!

The boy fired as quick as lightning, and the revolver fell to the ground, while a cry of pain sounded.

Then hurried footsteps could be heard, and the young deadshot could not help laughing, for he knew the villains were fleeing for their lives.

He stepped boldly around to the rear of the house and was just in time to see the last of them going around the other corner.

"Get back and head them off, boys," he called out to his two partners.

"Whoopee!" Cheyenne Charlie shouted, and away he ran for the front of the house again, followed by Dart.

But there happened to be a thick clump of bushes something like fifty yards from the other end of the house, and toward this the nine ruffians hurried.

By the time Charlie and Jim got around to the front they were nowhere to be seen.

But Wild followed them up the full length of the house and saw where they went.

"Pshaw!" he exclaimed, as he turned and looked at two or three men who had ventured to peer out of the back doorway. "That's the most cowardly bunch I ever came across. Talking about shooting any one on sight! Why, they haven't got enough sand in them to do it."

"An' it's the gang from Marker's Ranch, too, boys," one of the men in the doorway said, as he turned and addressed those behind him. "What do you think of it, anyhow? Speckled Dick has took water from a couple of boys an' one man."

Wild now felt more easy than he had before.

He knew pretty well that he had the rascals in a state of fear, and that they would hardly attempt to do anything unless they were quite certain they would have it all their own way.

He walked leisurely into the house and, passing through the barroom, went outside and took a seat on the porch.

Jim came along presently and remarked that he thought he would go and see how the girls were making out.

"All right," our hero answered. "That's a good idea. Just let them know that they needn't be afraid that we are going to get hurt. We have got the gang from Marker's pretty well under control now, and the chances are we'll be able to hold them that way."

People were coming from both ways now, though quite a few of them had driven wagons to the fair-grounds and stopped there, no doubt having eatables with them.

The rascally cowboys did not show up again, and when Wild was informed by another cowboy that they had taken their horses and gone over to the fair-grounds, he made up his mind that the next time the trouble was started it would be at that place.

"Is there anything going on before dinner?" he asked.

"Nothin' much," was the answer. "Of course, any one kin go over there an' have a look around at the vegetable show an' the hogs an' the cattle an' sich like. But if you come out you'll have to pay fifty cents to git in ag'in."

"All right, I don't mind that part of it. But I reckon we'll wait until after dinner before we go over."

"Say, are you Young Wild West?" a rather good-looking young fellow, who was conspicuous in a brand-new shirt, buckskin trousers and bearskin cap, asked suddenly, as he stepped over and looked keenly at the young deadshot.

"That's who I am," was the reply.

"Well, I'm called Deadshot Clancy, an' I've sorter got an idea that I'm goin' to win the prize in the shootin'-match this afternoon. Some of the boys told me that it wasn't likely I'd

stand much show, 'cause you was the Champion Deadshot of the West, an' you would be likely to beat everybody that enters. Now, then, if you don't mind, I'm goin' to make a proposition to you."

"Go ahead and make it," Wild answered, with a smile, for he had come to the conclusion that the young fellow was pretty fair and square.

"All right, I'll tell you what it is, then. I call myself a mighty good shot, an' you sartinly must call yourself the same."

"Yes, I'll admit that."

"Well, s'pose we have a little shootin'-match now. If you beat me you enter for the prize. If I beat you I'll enter."

"I see what you mean, and I think the proposition is a good one. Whenever you're ready I'll accommodate you. It makes no difference which way you want to shoot, either."

"Good! That makes me feel better. I wouldn't want to pay no two dollars to go in that shootin'-match if I thought there was some one in it who could beat me easy. I ain't afraid of none of the rest, you kin bet."

There was an air of sincerity about Deadshot Clancy which Wild rather liked.

"How are you going to have it?" he asked, as the cowboy started for his horse, which was hitched to a post near the water-trough.

"I heard say the best of the shootin' was goin' to be done from horseback, so that's the way I'd like to try it out with you."

"All right. I haven't my horse here, but probably some one will loan me one for a few minutes."

A dozen sprang forward eagerly and offered the use of their horse.

Wild looked over the bunch that were tethered near at hand, or else nibbling along at the grass which grew at the roadside, and finally selected a rather bony mustang.

"Who owns this nag?" he asked, looking around.

"I do," a man who looked to be a fitting companion for the steed answered, as he came running up. "But say, kid, that horse is a regular terror. I call him Blazes, 'cause he's full of fire. He don't look much, but he kin kick the stars out of the sky if he takes a notion, an' when it comes to buckin', he kin upset the best man what ever squatted on leather."

"Is that so? Well, I'll try him, anyhow. I reckon I can manage him all right."

"You're welcome to try him. But if anything happens to yer don't you hold me responsible."

"Say," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie, scornfully, "you don't s'pose there's any horse what ever lived that kin upset Young Wild West, do yer?"

"Maybe this one can't, then," the man, who was tall and lanky and sharp-featured, retorted, and then he took a good look at our hero. "But, anyhow," he added, "he's welcome to try him. Maybe he won't be able to do much shootin', 'cause it ain't likely if he's got to tame him he'll have much of a chance to do so."

Deadshot Clancy seemed to know the horse, too, for he looked at Wild and shook his head.

"It wouldn't be givin' you a fair chance, Young Wild West," he said. "That ain't no kind of a nag to ride an' do sich shootin' as I'm goin' to do."

"Never mind about that. I am not going to change my mind. I asked permission to use the horse, and I'll take him now. If you beat me out I will guarantee you that I won't enter the shooting-match at the fair."

"All right. You're sartinly givin' me a mighty good chance. I ain't told yer what I'm goin' to shoot at yet, have I?"

"No. Maybe you mean to shoot at me and let me shoot at you."

"No, no! Don't think nothin' like that," and the young man gave a start. "You ain't s'posin'," he went on, "that I'm tryin' to pick a muss with yer, are yer, Young Wild West?"

"Certainly not. I only said that for a joke. Sometimes I meet fellows who are willing to take a shot at me. There are a few hereabouts now that would be glad to do it if they dared to."

"Well, I ain't one of 'em, an' you kin bet on that. Git on the nag an' see if you're still satisfied to use him in this here little game."

Wild unhitched the horse, and after patting it upon the neck gripped the bridle with his left hand and placed his foot in the stirrup.

The mustang swished its tail viciously, its nostrils quivering with anger.

But that made no difference.

As quick as a flash the young deadshot was in the saddle.



Then ensued a very pretty bucking exhibition.

But it did not take the mustang long to realize that it stood no chance with the boy.

Wild then forced the animal to leap and walk along upon its hind-hoofs, after which he rode about in a circle a few times and then brought the animal to a standstill.

"I reckon I'm ready now, Deadshot Clancy," he called out.

"Come on, then," was the reply, and our hero noticed that there was a look of admiration upon the young man's face.

As a general thing, when a cowboy wants to show his skill at shooting on horseback, tomato cans are brought into play as targets.

There are always plenty of them to be had at a ranch-house and other places, and he quickly pointed to several of them that were lying in a heap near the roadside.

"If somebody will agree to chuck up a couple of cans for each of us we'll soon settle as to which is the best shot," he said.

"Shall I do it, Wild?" Cheyenne Charlie called out.

"No, I'd rather let one of this man's friends do it, Charlie. He might think you would favor me."

"No, no," Deadshot Clancy spoke up, quickly. "If he'll do it I'll be satisfied, for most likely he knows jest how to throw up a can so a feller kin git a good chance at it."

"I reckon I do," Charlie answered, and then he gathered up half a dozen of the cans, some of them still bearing the labels that had been pasted upon them to designate their contents.

There was quite an open space a short distance from the hotel, and the store was almost opposite.

Toward this the cowboy rode, and Wild followed him, the bony mustang going rather gently now.

The lanky owner of the steed had been greatly surprised, but now he acted very much as though he was more than pleased at seeing the boy so easily subdue the mustang.

"If that kid kin shoot as well as he kin handle a bad horse there ain't nothin' livin' as kin hold a candle to him," he declared to some of those standing about.

"You'll see all about it in a minute," Cheyenne Charlie declared, as he walked along with the cans.

"I've heard say," Deadshot Clancy observed, as he brought his horse to a halt, "that them what goes into the match this afternoon has got to ride around in a circle an' shoot at whatever is chucked up in the air from the middle. That's the way we'll do it now, if you don't object."

"I told you before that I was willing to anything," Wild said, smiling at him reassuringly.

Charlie stepped out to about the center of the open space, and then Deadshot Clancy started his horse at a gallop, going in a circle that might have been a hundred feet in diameter.

"Say when you're ready," the scout called out, as he held one of the cans ready to hurl it into the air.

When the cowboy had gone around once he called out for Charlie to let the can go.

The scout easily threw it quite a distance straight up in the air.

Crang!

Deadshot Clancy fired, and the spectators which had formed a big circle broke into a cheer, for nearly every one of them could see that the bullet had hit the can.

"That's one for me," Clancy shouted. "Jest keep that can, and chuck up another one as soon as you're ready."

Charlie ran over and picked up the can, and after making sure that the bullet had passed through it, he tossed it to one of the bystanders and then without even glancing at the competitor for shooting honors, he tossed up another.

Crack!

This one was hit, too, and another cheer went up.

"There you are, Young Wild West!" Deadshot Clancy exclaimed, as he brought his horse to a halt before the young deadshot, who was waiting near the scene. "I reckon that's about my limit."

"I'm sorry to say that you don't stand much of a show, then," Wild answered, in his cool and easy way. "I am quite sure I can do as much as tie you. If I do that I'll have to show you something a little more difficult."

"Yes, I was expectin' that," and the deadshot's face fell.

"Are you ready, Charlie?" our hero asked, looking at the scout.

"Yes, Wild," was the reply.

"All right, then."

Then away he dashed, taking about the same circuit as the cowboy had done.

When he was nearly around once Charlie threw up a can without waiting to be told to do so.

Crack!

Wild fired, and the can gave a jump, and then came to the ground.

The cheering was about the same as it had been when the cowboy performed the first shot.

"That's one for me," our hero said, with a smile, as he rode past Deadshot Clancy.

"Well, you kin do that all right," was the reply.

Then Charlie quickly tossed up another can, while Wild was not looking.

But the boy was right there, and again his revolver spoke.

He hit the can, of course, and when it came down he turned and rode back to the center of the open space.

"I reckon I've tied you, Clancy," he said, nodding to the cowboy.

"I reckon so," was the reply.

"But I'm satisfied you can do something better than that. Let my partner take another can and see if you can't hit it two or three times before it gets to the ground. That will be a little better, I think."

"I can't do that over once out of a dozen times, for I've tried it," was the reply, with a shake of the head.

"All right, try it again."

"Well, I will, then. But I know now that I ain't goin' to take part in the shootin'-match at the fair this afternoon."

Charlie selected a can which was, no doubt, the cleanest one of the lot.

"We'll have to have two, I s'pose," he observed, with a grin, and then he looked for another and quickly found it.

"Here's a big red tomato on both of the cans," he added. "S'pose you try to hit the tomato at the first shot, an' then wing the can any place for the second?"

"There ain't much use of me tryin', but I said I'd do it, so here goes," the cowboy answered.

"Do you want me to wait till you say you're ready?" the scout asked.

"No, you kin throw it up every time after I git started."

"All right, go ahead."

Dick Clancy started his horse around at a gallop, and then Charlie tossed one of the cans high into the air.

Crack!

The cowboy fired and hit the can, and as it started to come down he shot again and missed.

"I knowed it," he called out, for he saw what happened. "It ain't no use."

He came riding back and looked at the can, which several of the bystanders were examining as Charlie held it in his hand.

"I hit the edge of the tomato, all right, though," and he seemed to be somewhat pleased at this.

"That's a pretty good stunt you proposed, Charlie," Wild observed, smiling at the scout. "But I am going to try and see if I can do it."

Then without another word he rode up and quickly turned to make the circle.

Charlie was not one bit afraid that he would make a miss of it, so he let the can go into the air quickly.

Wild was watching it, and when he saw it turn over as the bright-red spot was toward him, he took a quick aim and fired.

Over went the can, bouncing a little to the left, and then before it had time to start to descend he fired again and sent it almost directly upward.

Not satisfied with this, he fired a third shot and hit the can again.

Then as it started to come down with full force he let the fourth one go, spinning the can several feet out of its downward course.

"Well, by all that's good and bad!" exclaimed Merkle, the hotel clerk, who had managed to leave long enough to come out and see the exhibition. "That's the greatest shooting I've ever seen."

## CHAPTER V.

### A TENDERFOOT MEETS HIS BROTHER.

There may have been nearly a hundred spectators gathered about when the little shooting-match took place, and when Young Wild West rode back to the front of the hotel on the bony mustang he was cheered to the echo.

But the boy never paid the least attention to this, for it was an old thing for him to be cheered.

He coolly tied the horse, and then ejected the empty shells from his revolver and replaced them with fresh cartridges, dropping the weapon into the holster.



Deadshot Clancy rode up, and after dismounting, came forward and held out his hand.

"Shake, Young Wild West!" he said. "I'd be a fool to think of goin' into a shootin'-match when you was around. I've got about a hundred an' ten dollars with me, an' if I kin find any one to bet with I'm goin' to lay it all on you this afternoon."

"I wouldn't advise you to do that, Clancy," the boy retorted, with a shake of the head. "I might make a miss of it. Another thing, there may be others around here who can outshoot me."

"No, there ain't. I know about everybody who's goin' into the shootin'-match. I've been around here three years, an' I reckon I'm putty well acquainted. There's only one man who thinks he kin shoot as good as I kin, an' that's Speckled Dick, the foreman of Marker's Ranch. But I'm sartin I kin beat him, an' if I do any shootin' to-day it will be with him for a side bet."

"All right, you're your own boss, so I won't say any more."

"Here comes the stage-coach. She's gittin' around a little early to-day," a man yelled out.

Then up the slope a rickety old vehicle, drawn by four horses, was seen approaching, the dust flying as it came.

"Where does that outfit come from?" Jim Dart asked one of the bystanders.

"From Dickensville, which is twenty miles to the south," was the reply. "There's a post-office down there, an' it's quite a place. This rig comes over twice a week an' brings the mail. Sometimes there's a passenger or two, but it ain't very often. Maybe there'll be a whole lot to-day, 'cause people's comin' from all over to the fair."

The man was mistaken about there being a whole lot, for as the old stage-coach pulled up before the hotel with a clatter and bang, only one passenger was to be seen, and he was sitting inside and acting very timid.

The moment the eyes of those waiting saw him a yell went up.

"A tenderfoot! A tenderfoot!" was the cry.

Wild noticed this as quickly as any one did.

The occupant of the vehicle was a young man conspicuous in a tailor-made suit and straw hat.

He certainly looked sadly out of place, considering the rough-and-ready costumes worn by those standing about, even though some of them were ready to declare that they had on their Sunday clothes.

"Driver," called out the passenger, thrusting his head from one side of the stage, "is this the hotel?"

"Sartin it is," was the gruff response. "Can't you read? Don't you see it says h-o-t-e-l over the door? This is the Ace High Hotel, an' it's kept by Tom Roberts. There ain't no better place this side of Durango, either."

"Thank you. I wasn't sure. I wonder if I'll be able to find my brother?"

"Don't ask me," and the driver leaped down and opened the door for him.

Then out stepped the passenger, carrying a leather suitcase with him that looked as though it was brand-new.

Again he looked timidly about, and then started for the door.

At this juncture a cowboy who had been imbibing too freely at the bar pulled a gun, and holding it above his head began shooting.

The tenderfoot gave a startled cry and looked about in dismay.

"Hurry up, stranger," the cowboy shouted, and then he fired a shot, the bullet landing close at the man's feet.

That was quite enough to start him going, and he gave two bounds and succeeded in reaching the door, while the crowd yelled with delight.

"That's the way we welcome tenderfeet," the cowboy cried, as he threw out the empty shells and put some fresh cartridges in the chambers of his gun.

Wild half expected to see him keep it up, but when he did not he said nothing.

It surely was a rather comical sight, anyhow.

Wishing to get acquainted with the tenderfoot, the young deadshot went inside, and Charlie and Jim followed.

They were just in time to hear him asking for the register, so he might put down his name.

The clerk laughingly explained matters to him, and he soon paid for the accommodations the two required.

"Maybe I'd better get your name," Merkle said, as he stepped from behind the desk. "There's going to be the liveliest time on record at Ace High to-day, and if you shouldn't

happen to get home again it would come in handy for us to let your folks know what happened to you."

"Oh, it won't be as bad as that," the tenderfoot answered, with a forced smile. "I am not used to the way you Westerners behave, but it won't take me long to do so. My name is William G. Halsey, and I am looking for my brother, Thomas, whom I haven't seen in ten years. He is supposed to be running a cattle ranch somewhere in this neighborhood."

"I know him, Mr. Halsey. Tom Halsey ain't here yet, but you kin bet he'll be here by noon-time. Everybody is comin' to the fair to-day, 'cause it's the big day. We was tryin' to git the Governor of the State to come down an' make a little speech, but I s'pose he reckoned it was too much of a distance to travel. We don't happen to be very close to a railroad, you see. That's one thing that's ag'in Ace High."

"I'm awfully glad to know that my brother is likely to come here. I shall stay right at the hotel until he arrives. Thank you very much."

Then the young man turned and his eyes happened to light upon the face of our hero.

"Excuse me," he said, stepping forward, "but you come nearest to being a true type of the real Westerner, young fellow, that I have as yet seen."

"Is that so?" Wild answered, laughingly. "I am glad to hear that."

"Yes, that's true. I've read much about the Wild West, and the pictures I have seen are many. Most of the heroes are described as always wearing their hair long. I notice that you and two or three others are all to be seen here that way."

"Yes, that's right. But the way a fellow wears his hair don't make any difference in him, you know."

"Of course not. But it looks more in keeping with what you are."

"That's right. The last time my hair was cut except to have the ends trimmed was so long ago that I have nearly forgotten it."

"It couldn't have been so very long ago, either, young fellow. You are but a boy yet."

"I know that. Probably it may have been twelve or fourteen years ago. I can't tell exactly. But here's Cheyenne Charlie. He hasn't had his hair cut in twenty years, though, of course, I can't vouch for it, for perhaps I wasn't born when it happened last."

"You're a little bit mistaken on that, Wild. I've had my hair cut quite a few times in twenty years," the scout declared, a grin on his weather-beaten face. "It's been cut by bullets, you know."

"You don't mean it!" cried William G. Halsey, excitedly. "At last I have met some real heroes of the Wild West."

"I ain't no hero," the scout retorted, rather scornfully. "But Young Wild West is."

"Young Wild West!"

The tenderfoot showed more surprise than ever. "Why, I've heard his name mentioned so many times since I've been in this region that I wondered if I would ever be able to meet him. But I am not so greatly surprised, after all, for, come to think of it, he looks exactly like Young Wild West should, according to what I have heard of him."

"No more flattery, please," the young deadshot spoke up, in his cool and easy way. "Just make yourself at home, Mr. Halsey. I am a stranger here myself, but I reckon I'll stick to it that you have a good time. We'll all go to the fair this afternoon. Most likely your brother will be on hand and we'll stick together. It has been said that it is going to be the liveliest time on record here, and I am going to do all I can to help it along."

The tenderfoot had become quite easy now, and he laughed when the half-drunken cowboy who had frightened him so by shooting off his revolver came in.

"It's all right, kid," the cowboy said, as he lurched toward the bar. "I won't harm a hair in your head. Of course, if I git a few more drinks in me I might take a notion to clean up that straw hat for yer. But that's all right. I've got money enough to buy you a decent hat if I do. Don't you be afraid now, 'cause I ain't goin' to hurt you."

"I am not a bit afraid," the tenderfoot answered, smilingly. "Young Wild West has just told me that he is going to take care of me, and that's quite enough."

"Well," and the cowboy assumed a comical attitude and looked Wild over from head to foot. "maybe he'll be able to do it. He's some on the shoot, I know, an' I'll give him my word that I don't want to go up ag'in him in that kind of a game. Any boy as kin chip a tomato can four times after it's been chucked up for him to shoot at afore it hits the ground



ain't to be sneezed at. I don't feel like sneezin' jest now, anyhow. But I do feel like takin' a drink. Come on up an' jine me."

"I reckon you had better excuse us," Wild said, good-naturedly. "Take my advice and don't spend all your money at oen time, too. This fair won't be over for two or three days yet, and you don't want to go broke."

"All right, Young Wild West. Your advice is mighty good. I reckon I'll take it. But I'm goin' to take another drink, too."

"If they were all like that fellow there wouldn't be much harm done, would there, Wild?" Jim Dart observed, with a smile.

"No, Jim," was the reply. "But a great many of them are like him. As a rule, cowboys are the best-natured fellows on earth. Once in a while a few bad ones get together, and then there is always trouble. It's so in the case of Speckled Dick and his crowd. I suppose he's such a rascal himself that he spared no pains to gather in a bunch as near like him as possible. Being the foreman of a ranch, it was easy for him to do this, and probably he enjoys creating rows wherever he goes. But I reckon if he isn't satisfied with what has already happened to him he'll git more than he wants before we leave Ace High."

It was not advisable for the girls to come out upon the hotel porch, for there were so many rough men gathered about that it would have been anything but pleasant for them.

A rushing business was being done all the time at the bar, and even men who were honest and good-natured were likely to become a little reckless.

After the tenderfoot had been shown the room he was to occupy, Wild invited him into the sitting-room, where the girls were making the best of it while waiting.

It was rather a cosy room, too, and quite a few books were on some shelves in a corner.

Eloise had availed herself of the opportunity to look these over.

But she quickly put them aside when our friends entered the room.

Halsey was duly introduced, and he soon showed himself quite a conversationalist.

But he finally began asking questions concerning the adventures our friends had passed through while making their many trips through the wildest parts of the West in search of excitement and adventure.

They all took turns at relating something, which was very interesting to him, and in this way the morning passed quite quickly.

Shortly before noon the hotel clerk came running in.

"Mr. Halsey, your brother is here," he said.

"Show him right in," Wild spoke up, as the tenderfoot turned to go out. "I reckon this is just as good a place as any for two brothers who haven't seen each other for ten years to meet."

"Certainly, certainly," and the clerk quickly retired.

A few minutes later he came in with a strapping big ranchman who was attired in a fancy blue shirt, buckskin breeches and a wide-brimmed sombrero.

A spotted handkerchief was knotted loosely about his neck, and his face was clean-shaven.

Our friends instantly saw a strong resemblance to the tenderfoot.

"Tom!" the tenderfoot exclaimed, as he ran toward him and put out both hands.

"Thunder an' lightnin'!" the ranchman exclaimed. "If it ain't little Bill! Markle said there was somebody here who wanted to see me, but he didn't say it was my brother what I ain't seen nigh on to a dozen years."

"It's me, all right, Tom."

"So it is."

Then the two fairly hugged each other, while our friends looked on, pleased and smiling.

The ranchman told his brother that he had given up the idea of ever going East again after learning that his mother was dead.

"I wrote to you all so many times to come out here, an' you didn't come, that I kinder forgot yer," he added. "But that don't say I ain't glad to see yer. You look as though you're down well. How much did you pay for them clothes, Bill?"

"Oh, not a great deal," was the reply. "I doubt if they cost any more than those you are wearing."

"Maybe they didn't. The rig I've got on, countin' everything from boots an' socks up, amounts to somethin' like fifty-three dollars."

"Well, I hardly think mine cost quite so much, so there you are."

"This hat cost eleven dollars," and the ranchman proudly exhibited it.

"And mine cost two," the tenderfoot observed, as he reached over and picked up the straw hat the cowboy had threatened to demolish.

"I wouldn't give five cents for no sich a piece of headgear as that," the ranchman declared. "But say! Can't you introduce me to your friends? They sartinly didn't come from the East, I kin tell that."

The tenderfoot quickly obliged him, and the ranchman, who had heard of Young Wild West, of course, was fairly delighted.

"Everybody is comin' to the fair to-day, if they don't come no other day," he said. "This is Wednesday, the big day. Some folks allow that the fair won't last to the end of the week, 'cause there'll be so many shoot-ups that it'll bust. But that don't make no difference. It's the first time we've ever had a fair in these here parts, an' everybody says it's goin' to be a lively time."

"The liveliest on record," Wild observed, with a laugh.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SPECKLED DICK GETS ANOTHER DOSE.

Before noon came there was quite a gathering at the fairgrounds, which were only half a mile from the village proper.

Ranchmen and farmers had brought their families over in wagons, nearly all of them having eatables with them.

Some of the wagons were of a very told type, and two or three prairie-schooners could be seen in the semi-circle that had been formed by them.

Most of the horses had been unhitched and turned out to graze, and with a few flags and bunting displayed upon the tents, the scene was quite picturesque, to say the least.

It was but natural that there should be a bar where strong drinks were sold located on the grounds, and it was near this that Speckled Dick and the eight cowboys hailing from Marker's Ranch were gathered.

They had been having things their own way during the time they had been there, and when twelve o'clock arrived they were in just the condition to make things lively.

While they had actually been driven out of the village by Young Wild West and his partners, they did not seem to act as though they were afraid of any one living now, and every once in a while one of them would fire a shot from his revolver and cause the women and children to shriek and run for their lives.

It happened that Speckled Dick was known by the majority of the people there, and they all were inclined to give him a wide berth.

This, no doubt, encouraged the villains greatly, and he kept at it almost continually, wasting enough powder and lead to kill a dozen grizzly bears.

One of the features of the fair was an exhibition by a tight-rope walker, which was to be given twice during the day.

The first performance was to occur at one o'clock, and the second at six.

The main tent beneath which the exhibits were displayed had a center-pole which was probably twenty-five feet in height, and from this the rope the performer was to use was attached, running down to a couple of stays a hundred feet away.

The men from Marker's Ranch got something to eat at the small tent that was a restaurant, and just about the time they finished, the tight-rope walker and two men he had as helpers were putting the rope in shape for the performance.

A crowd gathered, of course, and noticing that something was going on out of the ordinary, Speckled Dick led his men to the scene.

The tight-rope walker, who had been hired away up in Denver at an enormous expense, so it was advertised, wore his tights, but had a coat on, partly covering him.

He went about with his bare head, giving instructions to his two men, and when one of the latter began pulling upon the rope, while the other held a stay in position, Speckled Dick stepped up and said:

"What's this here goin' to be, anyhow?"

"Don't you know?" the performer asked, rather tartly, for he did not seem to take a great deal of stock in his questioner.

"No, I don't. If I knowed I wouldn't ask. But don't git sassy, Mr. Tenderfoot. If you do, I'll make you do some trottin' around here."

"Don't pick me up for a tenderfoot," was the quiet retort.



"Maybe I haven't lived in the West as long as you have, but I have been here long enough to know my business. You're drunk, that's what's the matter with you."

"Who says I'm drunk?" roared the angry rascal, and he promptly flourished a revolver.

"I do," was the reply.

"Stop that, Dick," a voice called out, and then the sheriff of the county came running to the scene. "It's all right for you to have a little fun, but let this man alone. He's been hired at a great expense by the people what's runnin' this here fair, an' you mustn't spoil the tight-rope performance."

"Oh, that's what's goin' on, eh?" and Speckled Dick at once put away his revolver.

But the fact was that he slightly feared the sheriff, for no doubt he realized that it would be rather unpleasant to be arrested and taken off to the calaboose.

"Yes, that's what's goin' on, Dick. Now jest let this man alone. He's the celebrated Signor Hastings, the most wonderful tight-rope walker in the whole land."

"But he's a tenderfoot, jest the same."

"Never mind about that. Now behave yourself, 'cause I've got enough men here to stop a ruction if it's started, an' though I like you a whole lot, I'll have to treat you jest the same as if I didn't know yer. I'm the sheriff of the county, an' the law is on my side."

"I don't care an awful lot about the law, sheriff, but you're a putty good sort of galoot, so go ahead with the game."

The signor did not seem to bother his head one bit about the rough cowboy, but instructed his men, and after they had tightened the rope as they thought proper he tested it.

Then he asked the sheriff the time, and gave a nod and said:

"It's only eight minutes to one. I'll be ready exactly at one."

So saying, he turned and walked toward the small tent that he used for dressing purposes.

When he came back he was without his coat, and resplendent in pink tights and spangles.

He carried a long pole with him, which was to be used as a balance while walking to the top of the tent and back.

People were coming all the time now, and the clatter of hoofs sounded continually, while clouds of dust could be seen almost any way a person might look.

Just as the signor was ready to start on his perilous trip upon the tight-rope, Young Wild West and his friends rode up.

They had finished eating their dinner and had quickly saddled their horses and come to the fair-grounds.

The gang from Marker's Ranch saw them coming, and even though they had been drinking quite enough to put their courage to the highest pitch, they showed signs of uneasiness.

Nosey stepped over to the leader and said, in a whisper:

"Are you goin' to do anything now, Dick?"

"Not now," was the reply. "We'll wait a while. I want to have some fun. I'm goin' to cut that rope with a bullet when that feller starts to come back. I want to see him take a tumble an' make a hole through the tent."

"Oh, that's what you're up to, eh?"

"Yes, but don't say a word about it. Don't let none of the rest of the boys know what I'm goin' to do, either. I want to make a surprise. We ain't never had a fair in these here parts, an' we might as well have somethin' that ain't to be expected."

The performer ascended a rough ladder and stepped upon the rope, which had been drawn as tightly as possible by means of a pulley-block.

Young Wild West and his friends dismounted and then pushed their way through the crowd so they might get as close as possible, and, as luck would have it, they got very close to the bunch of rascals.

Wild had seen them, of course, and so had his partners and the girls.

But they were not the least bit alarmed, for they knew it was hardly likely that the villains would undertake to start a shooting-match in such a big crowd.

Halsey, the tenderfoot, and his brother, the ranchman, soon appeared on the scene, too.

They had walked over from the hotel, and they quickly joined Young Wild West's party.

It was not surprising that the well-dressed man from the East should attract as much attention as the tight-rope performer just then.

He was the only one attired in that fashion in the entire crowd.

But as the signor started to make his trip along the rope all eyes were turned toward him.

The man really was an expert at that profession, and he performed great stunts, so nearly every one was ready to admit.

Sometimes he would walk very slowly, and then he would start almost upon a run, all the while balancing himself with the pole.

Half-way to the end of the rope he stopped and then began swaying from side to side as much as the rope would give.

This brought forth a tremendous applause, and when he was ready the man continued on until he reached the top of the tent-pole.

He paused there and bowed right and left to the admiring crowd, after which he started to make the trip back.

Our hero took notice that Speckled Dick had his hand on a gun and was moving toward the tent.

"I reckon that fellow's up to something, boys," he said. "I am going to follow him."

Then, without another word, he walked leisurely after the villain.

Signor Hastings was just about twenty feet from the pole and walking along slowly upon the rope when Speckled Dick suddenly pulled his gun and, raising it, took a quick aim and pulled trigger.

Crack!

As the report rang out the tight-rope walker nearly lost his balance, for it startled him greatly.

Wild knew what the scoundrel was up to, and in a twinkling his gun was in his hand.

Having missed the first shot, the cowboy was going to try another.

But before he could pull the trigger this time Wild's revolver spoke, and the revolver flew from his hand, while blood trickled from one of his fingers.

"Take it easy up there!" the young deadshot called out in his cool and easy way.

But the signor had lost control of himself, and down came his pole, striking the tent and ripping a hole through it as it went on down to the inside.

He managed to catch himself, however, by grabbing at the rope, and there he hung in anything but an artistic way.

"What's the matter here?" roared the sheriff of the county, as he pushed his way through the crowd and found our hero standing before the scoundrel who had tried to sever the rope with a bullet.

"I don't know who you are, my friend," the young deadshot answered, in his cool and easy way, "but this sneaking coyote tried to cut that rope with a bullet. He missed the first shot, and before he could fire another I knocked the gun from his hand. I reckon I grazed one of his knuckles, too, but if I had done the right thing I would have shot him dead. He's no good, anyhow."

"Dick," the sheriff cried, his eyes flashing, "if you try anything like that ag'in I'll put you under arrest."

"Are you an officer?" Wild asked, a smile showing on his face.

"I reckon I am. I'm the sheriff of this here county," and the official promptly showed his badge.

"Oh, all right, sheriff. But don't arrest this fellow, for if he keeps on the way he has been going since early this morning I am satisfied that he will need an undertaker, and not a sheriff."

"Well, I don't know nothin' about that. Dick is a putty good feller sometimes. I've knowed him quite a little while, an' he's got a mighty good boss. I don't know what he's done to you, or I don't know who you are, but you seem to be a putty apt sort of boy, if I know anything. Any one as kin shoot a gun from a man's hand as quick as you done it sartinly knows somethin' about shootin'."

"It's Young Wild West," some one shouted in the crowd. "Hooray! hooray! hooray!"

Then for the next two minutes there was wild cheering from the crowd.

Many of them did not know what they were cheering for, but they did it just the same.

Meanwhile, the tight-rope walker had succeeded in letting himself hang downward, holding on by both hands.

In this way he came on down until he was clear of the tent, and then he dropped lightly to the ground.

"Where's the fellow who did all that shooting?" he demanded, his face red with anger. "I am not a gunman, but I can lick the daylights out of him in ten seconds."

"There were two of us who shot, Mr. Acter," Wild said, coolly, as he stepped up to him. "That fellow over there undertook to shoot the rope in two, so you would fall down and



perhaps break your neck. He missed the first attempt, and when he was going to try again I shot the gun from his hand."

"What!" and the astounded performer started back, his face paling instantly. "I thought," he added, "that it was some drunken fellow who fired the shot just to annoy me. He intended to cut the rope in two, did he?"

"That's just what he did."

"Well, I'll show him pretty quickly what I can do to him."

Thoroughly frightened now, Speckled Dick attempted to sneak away.

But the signor was too quick for him.

He ran up behind him and without giving him the least warning lunged out heavily with his right fist and caught him squarely upon the back of the neck.

The rascally cowpoy stumbled and fell to the ground upon his face.

"Get up, you cowardly hound!" the signor cried, and then he lost control of himself and began kicking the villain as hard as he could, though the thin-soled shoes he wore could not possibly hurt a great deal.

"Give it to him!" some one shouted.

But just then up rushed the cowboys from Marker's, with guns in their hands.

Young Wild West was quite equal to the occasion, however.

Out came his two revolvers, and in a voice that rang out clear and distinct above the tumult, he shouted:

"Put away your hardware, you sneaking coyotes! I'll give you just ten seconds to do it."

The effect was really wonderful.

One by one, the men dropped their guns into the holsters.

The tight-rope walker turned and looked at the boy in silent admiration, and Speckled Dick, accepting the opportunity, got up and sneaked away among the crowd.

"I reckon everything is all right now," our hero said, with a smile, as he nodded to the signor.

"Yes, I feel better now. But I came mighty near falling. That fellow is the same one who interfered when I was getting ready. I'll keep an eye on him."

"You needn't bother about it. We are going to do that," Jim Dart called out. "That fellow and his gang are after us. They have had two chances before this to go ahead and open up the game, but each time they have sneaked. I reckon they won't bother you again."

"Whether they do or not I am going to perform the feat that has been advertised. I contracted to walk the length of that rope and back twice to-day, and I am going to do it."

Then he resolutely made his way to the starting-point, the crowd cheering wildly.

The man was as good as his word, and he easily made the trip to the top of the tent and back.

The rascally cowboys had gathered at the drinking-place again and, satisfied to let them remain there a while, Young Wild West and his partners invited the girls to go and look at the exhibits of the fair.

## CHAPTER VII.

### HOP CONTRIBUTES TO THE LIVELY TIME.

Under the big tent on the fair-grounds there was certainly quite a display in the way of fruits, vegetables, poultry, pigs and quite a few agricultural implements.

It was rather a mixed-up affair, but since there were several departments there, it mattered little.

The pigs grunted and the fowls cackled, and the buzz of many voices made it nothing if not interesting.

As Young Wild West and his friends strolled through the wide entrance they saw Bob Sweet, the foreman of the Double L Ranch, and his men moving along slowly and taking in everything they saw.

"Hello, Bob!" the young deadshot called out. "Where have you been keeping yourself? I didn't see you outside when the excitement occurred."

"We was all out there, Young Wild West," the cowboy foreman answered, as he quickly turned and walked to meet them. "We was right close to yer, an' we was ready to take a hand if that gang from Marker's undertook to do any shootin'. It's a mighty good thing they didn't, 'cause a whole lot of people would have been hurt."

"Yes, it's a mighty good thing they didn't try it. But I reckon they haven't got enough sand in them to put up an open fight. I've seen enough of them now to make me quite sure of that. But how are you enjoying yourself?"

"Fine! Me an' the boys made up our minds we was goin' to keep putty sober till along toward night, anyhow. Say, but there's some mighty big pumpkins over here, the biggest

I've ever seen in these here parts. They say a man what was born an' brought up in the New England States raised 'em right in this county. He must know somethin' about raisin' pumpkins, all right."

"Probably he does. I've heard say that raising pumpkins is a great industry in the New England States. But where are they, Bob? I'd like to see them."

"Right over this way. Come on around. Hey, boys!" and he called to his companions, who quickly came forward.

Then all hands strolled around until they came to the display of pumpkins.

A wizened-faced man, with watery eyes, rather long hair, and a scraggy, yellowish beard on his face, was in charge of the stand, which was probably twelve feet square.

Pumpkins of all sizes were piled about, while there were other products of the soil there, too.

"What do you think of that?" Bob Sweet asked, as he pointed to a monster pumpkin, which must have weighed more than a hundred pounds.

"Great gimlets!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie. "Kin any one here tell me how many pies that feller would make?"

"That's a problem that we won't take time to solve, Charlie," his wife answered, with a laugh.

"I don't know when I've had a piece of pumpkin pie," and the scout smacked his lips at the thought of it. "I reckon we'll have to have a couple of the smaller ones to take along with us. You kin make pumpkin pies, gal, an' I know it. But I'll bet that heathen cook of ours can't."

"Me makee, Misler Charlie," a voice said almost at his elbow, and, turning, the scout saw Hop Wah standing there, grinning and bowing.

"Who told you to come sneakin' around here, heathen?" Charlie demanded, sharply. "There ain't nothin' here for you, as I kin see."

"Lat allee light, Misler Charlie. Me likee um fair velly muchee."

"It's a wonder you ain't found some card-sharps to play draw poker with afore this."

"Me findee plenty, so be, Misler Charlie. Me no hully 'boutee lat. Me wantee see evelythling at um Ace High fair."

"Well, I reckon it ain't goin' to take you more than an hour to see everything that's here. About the best thing yet is this here big pumpkin. Of course, it was all right outside when the feller walked the tight-rope. That was putty good, an' I'm mighty glad the feller didn't git hurt."

The wizened-faced man was all smiles now, and he began telling how, by constant experimenting and hard work, he had managed to raise such large pumpkins and potatoes.

"Step up an' examine 'em. Don't be afraid to touch 'em, 'cause they can't be hurt much," he said. "Maybe I kin sell you somethin' to take away with you. I s'pose you have got a ranch somewhere close by."

"No, we ain't got no ranch," the scout retorted, with a shrug of the shoulders. "That would be settlin' down too much. We're on the go all the time. We're always lookin' for somethin' lively an' excitin' like."

"I think there has been altogether too much excitement here already. But I'm afraid there'll be more before night. There's a very bad crowd here, as I've been told. Most everybody seems to think that the crowd from Marker's Ranch is goin' to upset things."

"That bunch certainly has an awful reputation," our hero observed, nodding to his companions. "But I reckon they'll have to get up a little more courage before they undertake to start anything going very soon again."

Then they walked inside the inclosure and listened to the man as he explained all about his stock of vegetables.

While this was going on, Hop was standing close to the big pumpkin that had attracted the attention of Bob Sweet and also that of Cheyenne Charlie.

The clever Chinese could not help playing a trick, and unobserved by any one, he was slyly cutting a hole in the pumpkin.

It did not take him long to do this, and then, watching his chance, he slipped an oblong object in it and carefully plugged up the end with some pieces of the rind.

But if any one had looked closely they would have seen what might have been taken for a thin piece of twine sticking out from the pumpkin.

But it was not twine.

It was a fuse, and it was attached to a big, home-made fire-cracker.

When Hop had arranged it to his full satisfaction he walked around with the rest and appeared greatly interested.



It took them about fifteen minutes to get tired of listening to the man in charge of the stand, and then they went outside and started on.

But Hop lingered near the spot, waiting for a big crowd to get there.

He was puffing away at a big, black cigar, and all he had to do was to reach over and touch the lighted end to the fuse.

As luck would have it, Deadshot Clancy, the cowboy who had been so easily defeated in a shooting trial by our hero, came along, followed by a dozen or more cowboys.

They all stopped to have a look at the big pumpkin, and while they were there a shout sounded at the further end of the tent, and in came Speckled Dick and his gang.

They had all been drinking quite heavily, but though rather boisterous in their way, were not doing anything that might be called objectionable.

They came toward the vegetable stand, and after them came the crowd, rather timidly, no doubt expecting that something was going to happen.

There was something going to happen, but Speckled Dick was not destined to cause it just then.

Hop stood there, calmly puffing away at his cigar.

In less than five minutes there was a very big crowd gathered about the stand.

The wizened-faced man appeared to be a trifle uneasy, for he seemed to recognize the rascally cowboys in the crowd.

But he undertook to tell them, in a squeaky voice, all about how the vegetables were raised, and how he would not mind disposing of a few when the fair closed for that day.

"Ain't that a scorcher, though?" Bob Sweet declared, as he looked admiringly at the huge pumpkin.

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Speckled Dick. "What are you talkin' about, Sweet? I've seen 'em four times as big as that in Californy."

A few tittered at this and, becoming angry right away, the leader of the ruffianly gang flourished a gun and shouted:

"Any one as says I ain't seen pumpkins four times as big as that one is a liar. Now, then, let's see who dares to take it up."

A quick silence came over them, and a bigger crowd was attracted, for the rough voice of the rascally cowboy rang out clear and distinct.

"Never mind about that, Dick," Sweet answered, rather boldly. "I ain't never been to Californy, so I ain't goin' to say you lie. Maybe they have 'em there as big as houses, but I don't care if they do."

"Say, you ain't lookin' for trouble, are yer? I jest feel like startin' somethin' right here."

Dick then gave an extra flourish of his revolver and looked around defiantly, while his companions nodded approvingly.

Our friends had stopped about a dozen yards away before a big booth that contained a display of farming implements from some enterprising firm located at Denver.

They were taking it all in, of course, and were expecting the villainous cowboys to break loose at any minute.

But the sheriff came in the tent just then, and when he saw him Speckled Dick subsided.

"I know blamed well, boys, there ain't a person here as doubts me when I say I've seen pumpkins in Californy four times as big as that one. But that's all right. This ain't Californy, so I s'pose that's the biggest pumpkin that's ever been seen in these here parts. I reckon I'll take a chunk of that back to the ranch with me when I go. I don't s'pose I'll go to-night, though, 'cause the boss has give us all two days off. But if anybody don't buy the pumpkin, an' it's here when we git ready to go home, I'm goin' to take a chunk of it."

"That there pumpkin ain't for sale," the wizen-faced man spoke up. "It's goin' to be cut up an' divided with them as has put money up to make this here fair a big success."

"That's all right. My boss put up some money, I reckon, so I'll take his share home."

"Very well," and the man appeared to be satisfied.

Speckled Dick was standing very close to the big production of the soil.

But this did not prevent Hop from edging up a little.

He thought it a good time now to set off the big cracker, so making out that he was knocking the ashes from his cigar, he reached out and touched the fuse.

He watched it carefully, and when he saw a quick sputter he knew it was all right, so he placed the cigar back in his mouth and then pushed his way back to the outside of the crowd.

The fuse was not a very quick one, and Hop did not want it to be.

He had a pretty good idea of what would happen when the cracker exploded.

The big pumpkin would fly into pieces, and the seeds and pulp would certainly spatter up things.

"This here pumpkin," Speckled Dick went on to say, as he placed his hand upon it, "may be all right to make pies. It wouldn't be very nice to fall on anybody, though, would it, boys?"

There was a laugh at this, his colleagues joining in and also a few others.

"I'm a putty good jedge of pumpkin pie myself," the rascal continued, acting as though he had been placed there to tell all about the pumpkin, and that he was really a man of great importance. "If I had a piece of pie that was made from this here pumpkin right now I reckon I'd go at it so hungry-like that I'd have it smeared all over my face. How would I look, boys, if I had pumpkin smeared all over my face?"

Before any one could venture to make a reply a report that sounded almost like that of a field-piece rang out, and Speckled Dick not only had the pumpkin smeared all over his face, but upon every other part of his body, too.

But he was not the only one.

Everybody within thirty feet of the explosion got the same dose.

Many of them stumbled and fell to the ground in an effort to get out of the way, for it seemed as though an earthquake had occurred.

Some of the seeds and pulp reached our friends, but not enough to cause any discomfort.

Hop got a little of it, too, and as he ran up to where Wild was moving away, he said:

"Velly nicee pumpkee, Mislter Wild. Allee samee biggee bang. Fly to pieces likee anythling. Hip hi, hoolay!"

But the young deadshot could scarcely hear what he said, for it seemed as though pandemonium had broken loose in the fair-tent.

"Velly lively timee, Mislter Wild!" Hop shouted, this time placing his mouth close to the young deadshot's ear.

"You rascal, you!" our hero answered, but he could not help laughing. "What did you do, anyhow?"

"Me fixee allee light, Mislter Wild. Me cuttee um hole in um pumpkee, and len me puttee velly biggee fireclacker in. Speckled Dickee gittee knockee down. Hip hi, hoolay!"

Quite a few were trampled upon, and some were injured slightly before they could get out of the tent, which was almost filled with the smoke the explosion had caused.

The canvas was spattered with seeds and the soft part of the gigantic pumpkin.

But this was nothing compared to some of those who had been standing close by.

Many were vowing vengeance upon the one who had caused the explosion, for it did not take them long to realize that it was not an earthquake that had occurred, but simply that the pumpkin had exploded.

The wizen-faced man had been knocked backward with such force that he had landed in a big basket of peaches that were rather soft, and there he laid, wedged in, kicking and waving his hands as though he expected every second was to be his last.

It certainly was an amusing as well as exciting scene, and when our friends got outside they were all laughing heartily.

Some others were doing the same thing, and it soon seemed to be catching, even those who were pretty well besmeared from the result of Hop's practical joke joining in.

Presently the sheriff of the county came running up to our friends.

"Young Wild West," said he, "they tell me that you're mighty smart at figurin' out things. If you kin tell me what made that pumpkin bust up like that I'll treat the crowd."

Then he picked a seed from his left eye and held it out at arm's length, looking at it and shaking his head in a puzzled way.

"Sheriff, probably I could tell you exactly, but it seems to me that some one must have put something in the way of powder inside of it and then touched it off."

"Yes, I reckon that must be the case. Do you s'pose that wizen-faced galoot what was in charge of the vegetable-stand could have done it?"

"No, I hardly think he would do that, for he has certainly wrecked his display, and it will take considerable time for him to be able to show anything again. Probably the majorily of the vegetables he had there are ruined."

"Let's go in an' see about it. I'll offer a reward of ten dollars for the galoot that blowed up that big pumpkin. I



was figuring on havin' a pie made from a piece of that in about a week from now. Now I won't git it."

"You got some of it, sheriff. If I am not mistaken there is a piece of the pumpkin hanging fast to your mustache now."

The chief officer of the county uttered something that might have been taken for a swear word, and then wiped his face with a big, red handkerchief.

Nodding to his companions, Wild said:

"I'll go inside with the sheriff and have a look around. Of course, it wouldn't do to tell him that Hop caused all the trouble and excitement. He would surely lock him up if he knew it."

"Why can't we all go back, Wild?" Arietta asked. "I see quite a few are going back, now that they have discovered that it was nothing really dangerous after all."

"All right, then. Suit yourselves. Come on."

Then the young deadshot led the way with the sheriff, who was very angry over what had happened.

"Whoever done that," he declared, shaking his head, "tried to bust up the fair. It's a shame, that's what it is."

"But I think a few men with some pails of water and brooms can clean up in a short time, sheriff."

"Maybe they kin. But look at the vegetable-stand, an' look at the big pumpkin."

"We can look at the vegetable-stand, all right, sheriff, but I have my doubts if we can look at the big pumpkin. I reckon that's in more than a million pieces."

"The one as done it oughter be made to scrape up all the pieces an' put it together ag'in," and as he said this the sheriff became somewhat mollified, while the vestige of a smile showed upon his face.

When they got back to the scene of the wreck the wizen-faced man had just started in to try and clean up a little.

The quick eye of our hero told him at once that not nearly as much damage as he expected had bene done, after all.

Only a few of the pumpkins that had been close to the large one had been broken.

A few were cracked, but they would still be all right to display.

"What have you been tryin' to do, Josh?" the sheriff asked, looking at the man as though he was very angry.

"Don't ask me, sheriff," was the reply. "That's the funniest thing I ever heard tell of."

"Well, you sartinly are a comical-lookin' galoot, anyhow," and then the sheriff broke into a hearty laugh. "I reckon a good dip in a horse-trough would do you good."

"That's all right. Don't make fun of me. But I'll come out in another suit of clothes pretty soon. This ain't the only one I've got, though I reckon there's a whole lot around here what ain't as lucky as I am."

The Fair Committee joined with the sheriff in making an investigation.

But at the end of an hour they were forced to admit that the whole thing was a mystery.

But the fair was going on, just the same, and finally when the head man of the committee announced that the contests for which prizes were offered were to begin, a great many forgot all about the explosion and hastened outside.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FUN AT THE FAIR CONTINUES.

The ground was very level where the fair was being held, and a short distance from the larger of the tents a quarter of a mile track had been staked out.

This was to be used for racing, for it had been decided that it would be better to have the racing done in a circle than straight away and back.

While the committee still talked about the remarkable occurrences in the big tent, they went ahead and made their arrangements for a cowboy race, open to all.

"Here you are," a stout man of the committee shouted, as he got upon a barrel. "Come up now and pay your dollar. It's open to any man what kin prove that he's worked on a cattle range. There's three prizes, an' the distance is five miles, twenty times around the track. The first prize is a saddle, the second is a silver watch, an' the third is one of the latest make of Smith an' Wesson revolvers. Now, then, we've got eleven to enter so far, but we oughter have as many as a hundred. Step up lively an' put your names down, an' don't forgit to hand over a dollar when you do it. You have got jest ten minutes to close the entries."

There was a rush, then.

But only those known to have very swift bronchos or mustangs chose to enter.

Bob Sweet was one of these, and so was Speckled Dick, who was bound to go in everything, anyhow.

The result was that there were thirty-five to enter, and they all lined up as well as they could and waited for the shot to be fired to start them off.

"There's only goin' to be one chance," the stout man called out. "When my gun goes off if there's any what don't git a good start it's their own fault. Jest remember, it's twenty time around. The nineteenth time you come to the startin'-point you'll see me wave a handkerchief, which means that you have only got to go once more around. Now, then, git ready."

The cowboys, a likely looking lot and all mounted upon speedy horses, awaited the signal to start.

Crack!

As the sharp report rang out they were off.

There was a collision in which two of the riders were thrown, but, nothing daunted, they quickly got up and mounted again and trailed along after the bunch.

Around they went, the dust flying from beneath the hoofs of the horses.

Our friends managed to get a pretty good place near the finish line, and when they got there they found Halsey and his brother watching things closely.

The tenderfoot was very much interested.

"Nothing suits me better than a horse race," he declared, as he tipped his hat when the girls came up. "I am beginning to think that you Western people know how to run fairs and entertainments, all right. If it were not for the fact that there were so many bad and reckless villains to be met, I think I would like to remain here for a month or two."

"You're goin' to stay here longer than that, though, Bill," his brother called out, good-naturedly, as he crowded his way to the spot.

"If I were managing this thing," the tenderfoot went on, not noticing his brother's remark, "I would run off this race in heats. I think about six at a time would be enough, and then let the winners of each heat compete in a final.

"Say, Bill, you don't know nothin' about horse racin'!" the ranchman exclaimed, with a laugh. "It would take too long to do that. It's as fair for one as it is for another. Can't you see how they're spreadin' out now? There's plenty of room up next the leaders, and when they git around a little further they'll be trailin' all right."

They had already gone around once now, and, sure enough, there was quite a few trailing away behind.

The second time around it was about the same, and the third time some of the stragglers began to catch up a little. It kept on going this way until the race was nearly over.

Then the spectators began to form conclusions as to who would be those who came in first, second and third.

Bob Sweet was fourth the last time around and, as he passed, Young Wild West called out:

"Go on, Sweet! I think you have a good chance."

The cowboy waved his hand, and then settled right down to business.

A hundred yards further on he drew up and took second place.

Speckled Dick was not in the race at all, so to speak, but he was still trailing along close to the rear.

As the riders came around toward the finish line the crowd shouted loudly, and handkerchiefs and hats were waved.

Bob Sweet was still second.

But when there was yet but a hundred yards to cover his broncho gave a leap and shot ahead, and he crossed the line a full length ahead of the nearest competitor.

Then the cowboys from the Double L certainly did yell themselves hoarse.

But they had lots of friends there among the spectators, so they were not alone.

The girls waved their handkerchief, for they really wanted to see the young foreman win.

It was quickly settled, and there seemed to be no animosity existing among any of them, though, of course, Speckled Dick had something to say about it.

His excuse was that he had too much liquor in him to ride, and every one voted that this was no excuse at all.

Bob Sweet was very proud when he received his prize, and he came right over to where our friends were standing to give them the first chance to examine it.

"A mighty fine saddle, ain't it?" he said, as Wild took it from him.

"It certainly is, Bob. You made a fine race. That's a pretty good horse you have."

"About as good as any of 'em, I reckon. Maybe he couldn't



hold out with that sorrel of yours, but I sorter reckon you wouldn't beat him out much in a mile."

"Perhaps not. But as there are no races I can go in, I'm afraid you won't have a chance to see Spitsfire run."

"Yes, there's a race you kin go in. There's one open for everybody, an' it's the second one to come now. The next is for the gals belongin' to the ranches."

"It don't make no difference where they belong, Bob," a voice called out, and then the chairman of the committee stepped forward. "Young Wild West has got some gals here, an' they sartinly lock as though they kin ride. They've got good horses, anyhow, if I'm any judge. We want 'em to go in the race, 'cause it will make it more interestin'. It seems we can't git over four or five so far, an' maybe if they'll go in more will have a try for the prizes."

"What's the prizes, Johnny?" the cowboy foreman asked.

"A gold ring is the first, the second is a pair of earrings, an' the third is a silver ring. It's the best we could do, considerin' what money we had to lay out in prizes. But the ring is worth fifteen or twenty dollars, all right."

Then he called to one of the others of the committee to show the prizes.

The girls laughed when they saw them.

The gold ring, which must have been bought by some one who knew little about such things, was large enough for an ordinary man's finger.

It was the same with the silver one, and the earrings were quite flashy, indeed.

"Ain't any of you gals goin' in?" the chairman said, coaxingly, as he looked at the girls.

"Go on, Arietta," the scout's wife spoke up. "Make it interesting. You know, it's supposed to be the liveliest time on record, and I can't say that it has gone that far yet, though there is no telling what may happen before the day is over."

The committee called up some of the cow-girls who had entered for the race, and they were introduced to the girls.

Then it was not long before Arietta consented to go in and try for a prize.

The result was that two or three more entered just to make up the crowd.

When they rode out for the starting line there were nine of them, and all seemed to be fine riders, indeed.

Arietta and her white broncho surely showed up a trifle better than the rest, and cheers went up from all sides.

The race was to be at a mile, and when the chairman of the committee announced it, another cheer went up.

The girls lined up and as the pistol cracked they went away with a very pretty start.

It being a fourth-of-a-mile track, it was necessary for them to go around four times.

Wild and the rest crowded up close to the finish line and watched with interest as the horses galloped around, raising a cloud of dust.

Arietta did not attempt to take the lead.

It was not the first race she had been in, and she relied upon making a spurt at the finish.

The first time around a girl conspicuous in a scarlet dress was leading by half a dozen lengths.

Arietta was fourth, while the rest were not so very far behind.

Arietta knew exactly what she was doing, and she held fourth place until the circuit had been made for the second time.

Then two of the others drew up and attempted to get ahead of her.

But this Young Wild West's sweetheart would not permit.

She urged her horse a little faster and soon took third place.

She was a close second the third time around, and a yell went up, for it looked as though she might be a winner now.

But the leader suddenly put on a spurt and drew away from her, and half-way around she had a lead of twenty yards.

Arietta knew that now was the time to make the spurt.

She had an eighth of a mile to go, and speaking sharply to her horse, she gave him a gentle tap with her whip and away went Snowflake, like an arrow from the bow.

The girl in the lead looked over her shoulder and saw Arietta rapidly gaining upon her.

Then she urged her broncho to a faster pace.

But it was no use.

Arietta continued to gain rapidly, and when the finish line was not more than fifty yards away she shot past and rode in a winner by about four lengths.

Loud cheers and shouts went up from all hands, and everybody seemed to be satisfied with the result of the race.

Of course, the defeated girl must have been disappointed, but she took it gracefully, and as the one winning third prize came forward when the announcement was made as to who had won, she shook hands with Arietta and congratulated her.

Arietta accepted the big ring, with thanks, and then Hop took her horse and started around the track at a walk.

"What's that heathen up to?" the chairman of the committee called out. "I reckon that horse don't need no coolin' off. We want to go right ahead with another race, which is open for all. The prizes ain't goin' to be so much in this here race, but we expect a whole lot to go in."

Wild shouted to the Chinaman and called him back.

"Whattée mattee, Misler Wild?" Hop said, as he rode back and looked at the young deadshot, curiously.

"Well, they want you to keep off the track. There is going to be another race."

"Lat allee light, Misler Wild. Me havee lilliee fun, so be."

"Well, you had better stop having fun, for the first thing you know you'll get into serious trouble."

"If me gittee in touble me gittee outtee velly mucheee quickee, so be."

Seeing there was no use in talking any further to him, the young deadshot turned his attention to what was going on.

In spite of the coaxing he received to enter the race, he refused to do so.

It took some little time to get all the contestants in a bunch at the starting line, and when they were ready there were a score or more of them.

It was announced that the prizes were a revolver for a first, a bowie-knife for second, and a silver match-box for third.

Two rather old men were in the race.

They were ranchmen, and probably thought they had horses that were quite able to win.

They were right, too, and when the start was made one of them got a good lead.

The leader of the race had not gone more than a hundred yards when a sharp report sounded and his horse bounded forward, like a rocket.

Consternation seized almost every one, for it sounded like the report of a revolver, yet no one had been seen to fire one.

Another report sounded, and then the horses began kicking at a great rate.

They continued on a short distance, and then two or three more reports rang out.

The competitors scattered, and soon came riding back, amazed at what had happened.

"Whattée mattee, Misler Wild?" Hop said, as he got close to our hero.

There was a broad grin on his face, and the young deadshot knew right away that he was responsible for the unexpected occurrence on the track.

"What did you do, Hop?" he asked, sternly.

"Me allee samee dlop somethin', Misler Wild. Maybe am torpedoes. If ley on um ground and um horsee stepped on lem ley allee samee go bang!"

"You rascal! What did you do that for?"

"Me wantee makee lilliee lively timee, so be, Misler Wild." Our hero could not help laughing.

But when he found that such a serious view was taken of it by almost every one he decided to explain it in a way that would relieve their fears.

So he went to the chairman and whispered a few words in his ear.

The man seemed greatly surprised, but presently a broad grin showed upon his face.

"Hey, there!" he called out, waving his hand, "there wasn't no shootin' done. That heathen Chinee what was riding the white horse around the track a little while ago had a hole in one of his pockets an' he dropped some of them torpedoes that the kids use on Fourth of July. He's mighty sorry he lost 'em, so I hear, but it's kinder funny at that. You see, the horses must have stepped on 'em and made 'em explode. It wasn't no shootin', ladies an' gentlemen."

Of course, all could not hear this explanation, but it did not take long to spread it around through the crowd, and then every one wanted to get a close look at the Chinaman who had been so unfortunate as to lose the torpedoes he had in his pocket.

It delayed the race nearly ten minutes, and Hop, with a very sorrowful expression on his face, told all who came up close to him that he had wanted to keep the torpedoes until the Fourth of July came.



The race was finally run off, and an old ranchman was the winner, much to the satisfaction of about every one except those who lost.

More races were run off with great success, and finally it was announced that the shooting-match would begin.

The chairman had scarcely got through speaking when Deadshot Clancy, the cowboy Wild had defeated so easily near the hotel, got up and shouted:

"I ain't goin' in this here shootin'-match, 'cause I made an agreement with Young Wild West this mornin' that if he beat me shootin' I'd stay out, so he's goin' in, an' if there's any one here as wants to make a little bet I'll put my money on Young Wild West to win."

"What do you think about it, Et?" Wild said, turning to his sweetheart. "I hardly think it advisable to go into the shooting-match. That fellow, by talking as he did, will make a whole lot keep out of it, and I suppose the committee wants to get all the money they can from the entries. I reckon I'll announce that I am not going into it, but if they desire I'll give a little exhibition after the match is over."

"Splendid, Wild!" Arietta answered. "We'll tell the chairman that."

The young deadshot walked over to where the master of ceremonies was standing upon a barrel, and assured him that he would not enter the shooting-match.

"I'm sorry for that," was the reply. "It would be a big thing for us."

"No, it wouldn't. I'll tell you what I'll do. When the match is over and the winner has been announced I'll give you a little exhibition, if you like."

"Great ginger!" the chairman exclaimed. "That's better yet. Now jest wait till I let everybody know what's goin' to be done."

Then he shouted at the top of his voice in all directions, announcing that immediately after the shooting-match Young Wild West would give an exhibition, and that under no conditions would he take part in the match himself.

Deadshot Clancy came up after a while, and when he found Wild, he said:

"I'm sorry you ain't goin' in."

"That's all right, Clancy. You can go in now. I'll give you permission. Never mind about the agreement we made."

Clancy seemed to be very much pleased, and he was not long in entering his name for the contest.

Then it was announced that the contestants could have fifteen minutes to make ready and decide upon the way they were to shoot for the prizes.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE END OF THE LIVELIEST TIME ON RECORD.

Speckled Dick, who had been imbibing more liquor and was now what might be called gloriously drunk, wanted to have more to say than any of the rest.

He was going to shoot for the prize, of course, and his gang was boosting him all they could.

However, Young Wild West and his partners were keeping a good watch upon them.

They all knew that the rascally foreman of Marker's Ranch was just about in trim to break out again.

The sheriff managed to keep him within bounds, however, and after a lot of wrangling it was decided that they were to shoot at tin cans from horseback.

After they thoroughly understood it it was satisfactory to them all.

There were not as many as Wild had thought who called themselves deadshots.

Only fourteen qualified, and they were all cowboys.

The committee had taken pains to secure all the empty tomato cans that were necessary, so there was nothing to delay the starting of the match, and as fast as the names were called off a cowboy would start riding in a circle, while a man in the center would throw up a can for him.

The first three hit them, and then the fourth man missed and withdrew in disgust.

The next man up was Speckled Dick, and he received a rousing cheer from his gang and a few others who thought it wise to keep on his side.

He easily made the shot, and rode back with an air of triumph.

Then it went on, the others missing, with the exception of Deadshot Clancy, who came last.

One by one they dropped out until finally there were but two of the competitors left.

They were Deadshot Clancy and Speckled Dick.

The latter, in spite of his drunken condition, was showing wonderful cleverness with his gun, and there was hardly a person there who did not feel that he had as good a chance to win as Clancy.

However, the latter was quite cool, and when it came his turn again he nodded to our friends and called out:

"I'll keep him goin' as long as I've got any cartridges left, I'm here to win this shootin'-match."

Luck seemed to be against Clancy, for, in spite of his boast, the very next shot he fired missed the tomato can.

Then the rascally cowboy took his chance and won the match.

"Go it easy, Dick," the sheriff advised, as the villain received the prize, which was a ten-dollar gold-piece.

"I'll go it easy, all right. Jest watch me. I'm goin' to do some ridin' right through the crowd now. Whoopee!"

He started his broncho off at a mad gallop, and the people scattered right and left.

Making the turn, he came riding back, a whip in his hand, to urge the horse at a faster gait.

Halsey, the young man from the East, and his brother were standing right near our friends at the time, and when they saw the reckless villain riding straight toward them they promptly got out of the way.

"Wow! wow! wow!" yelled Speckled Dick, and then he dashed forward, wildly.

Halsey, unable to get out of the way, was hurled violently to the ground, while the now frightened broncho reared high in the air.

As the tenderfoot was knocked down by the frightened horse Young Wild West ran forward.

A flying leap and he was upon the animal's back, gripping the reckless cowboy by the throat.

At the same moment Cheyenne Charlie grabbed the horse by the bridle.

Speckled Dick was not exactly prepared for what happened.

But he realized that he had been balked, and an oath came from his lips as he attempted to throw the whiplash around the boy.

But the grip around his throat quickly took away his strength, and the result was that he rolled from the saddle, dragging Wild with him.

Speckled Dick's followers pulled their guns and the crowd scattered.

"Look out, there, you sneakin' coyotes!" Cheyenne Charlie shouted. "The first man who pulls a trigger is goin' to die!"

The scout was quite ready for them, and so was Jim Dart.

Both stood facing the angry cowboys with drawn revolvers.

A shout sounded behind them, and then Bob Sweet came up with his crowd.

"It's a gun-fight now, for fair!" the foreman of the Double L yelled at the top of his voice. "Let's finish this, boys. That bunch from Marker's has been pilin' it on us long enough."

Crack!

One of Marker's men fired a shot just then and the bullet went pretty close to Sweet's head.

Crack!

The shot was returned and the man who had fired first got a bullet in his arm.

He dropped to the ground, rolling over and over, and then the crowd set up a shout.

The sheriff came running to the scene, and being a very brave man, he ran right between the two parties.

Meanwhile, our hero had completely overpowered Speckled Dick.

But not until the villain promised to behave himself did he let up on him.

Revolver in hand, Wild arose to his feet and, seeing the sheriff doing his best to stop the hostilities, he shouted:

"They started it going, sheriff. If you're the boss of this county it is your duty to arrest them. I'll help you do it, too."

"Hold on a minute, Young Wild West," came the reply, for it was evident that the sheriff did not want to make any arrest. "Maybe we kin settle it without doin' that."

"All right. You know your business better than I do, perhaps. But I tell you that if those fellows don't leave the fairgrounds inside of ten minutes they are going to get shot full of holes. You hear what I say."

The rascally cowboys promptly put away their guns, and when he saw this the sheriff turned angrily to the young deadshot and exclaimed:

"I don't want you to try to dictate to me, Young Wild West."



I reckon I've been sworn in as sheriff of this here county, an' what I say is law."

"That's all right enough. But you took an oath when you were sworn in that you would arrest all law-breakers and see to it that they were duly punished. You are not doing it in this case, for you seem inclined to let this gang go."

"Do you know who you're talkin' to?"

"Yes, I know pretty well. You're the sberiff of this county, you say."

"You kin bet your life I am."

"Well, you're a mighty poor one, then, in my estimation."

The sheriff completely lost his temper, then, and stepping up he showed his badge in a very officious way and reached out his hand to place it upon the boy's shoulder.

But Wild quickly stepped aside, laughing at him in a taunting way.

"You was just going to say I was under arrest, I think," he observed, coolly.

"Yes, an' I say it now. You're my prisoner, Young Wild West."

Again he reached out his hand.

But Wild easily escaped being touched by it.

"See here, sheriff," he said, in his cool and easy way, "if you lay a hand on me I'll be compelled to knock you down! I don't care whether you're sheriff of this county or not. Now, then, go ahead with your game."

But the sheriff was nothing but a bluffer, after all, and he took water, as the saying goes.

"I don't know as there's any need of havin' any more trouble, Young Wild West," he said, rather mildly. "I think the boys from Marker's will behave themselves now. They're a little too full of tanglefoot, an' that's some excuse for them."

"All right. If you're satisfied to let it go at that, I am. But I tell you plainly that they have got to leave the fair-grounds inside of ten minutes."

"All right. I ain't goin' to say no more. But understand that I'm the sheriff of this here county."

"I told you what I thought about that, sheriff," and the boy laughed lightly and turned his attention to the rascally gang again.

"You heard what I said, Speckled Dick," he called out, sharply. "You and your bunch have got to get away from here. You have only got about eight minutes now to do it in."

The boy took out his watch, but the men did not move a step.

"Hop," Wild called out, without taking his eyes from them, "fetch Spitfire here."

"Allee light, Mislér Wild," came the reply, and the Chinaman ran and got the sorrel stallion.

Still the bunch of rascals did not offer to move from the spot.

"Boys, you had better get your horses, too," Wild said, without looking behind him.

"Me gittee, Mislér Wild," the Chinaman answered, and he quickly did so.

"Only five minutes more, Dick," the boy said, as he swung himself upon the back of the sorrel. "I'll wait until the time has elapsed and then if you don't start I am going for you. I am going to drop you all just as fast I can shoot, too."

The boy kept his revolver pointed toward them all the time, and he now lifted the bridle-rein and placed it in his mouth.

Then he drew another revolver and leveled it straight at Speckled Dick.

Charlie and Jim were not long in mounting, and ranging themselves beside the young deadshot, they waited.

Bob Sweet and his men had taken the cue, and they quickly came galloping to the spot.

The crowd had spread apart on either side, so they would be out of danger of being shot, and the bad bunch were right in the open now.

"Let's go and get a drink, boys," Speckled Dick called out, trying to make it appear as though he was not a bit frightened.

They headed straight for the stand where liquor was sold, but before they reached it they turned sharply and made for their horses.

A shout of derision went up from the better element that was gathered upon the fair-grounds.

Speckled Dick swore a little and shook his fist at the crowd, but kept right on until he reached his horse.

Then he mounted, and, pulling a gun, shook it at Young Wild West and his partners and exclaimed:

"Come on away from the crowd and we'll fight it out."

"That's just what I want to hear," the boy answered, coolly. "Go ahead and you'll find us right there when you get ready."

The villains rode slowly away now, heading for the right.

Bent upon forcing them to leave for good, Wild and his partners went along after them, the cowboys from the Double L following close behind.

"This ain't no fair deal," the man called Nosey shouted, as he reined in his horse for a moment.

"Yes, it is, Nosey," our hero answered. "Only three of us are going to take part in this fight. Please remember that. When you get ready, fire the first shot. Then we'll show you how quickly we'll send your horses running about without riders."

Nosey hesitated for a moment, and then he spoke rapidly to his companions in a low tone of voice, after which he turned his horse and came riding directly toward our friends.

"I'll give in!" he exclaimed. "Take me an' do what you like with me. I don't want to leave the fair-grounds yet. I ain't sich a bad feller as you think I am."

"All right, Nosey. You can go on back and have a good time."

This seemed to be the cue for the rest to come forward and apologize for what they had done, with the exception of Speckled Dick.

"Well, Dick," the boy said, as he rode over to where the villain was in waiting, "what are you going to do about it?"

"I don't want to go back there an' have everybody pokin' fun at me. I've got the reputation of bein' a mighty bad man, especially when I've been drinkin'. I've been drinkin' a whole lot to-day, an' that's why I'm ashamed to go back."

"Don't you think you would be a whole lot better off if you didn't drink so much?"

"It ain't hurtin' nobody but me."

"Maybe it isn't. But I think if you were to let liquor alone and make up your mind to go a little slower you would be all the better for it."

"What do you want me to do, Young Wild West?"

"I want you to go right back to the fair-grounds and have a good time. But don't drink anything more to-day."

At this juncture the sheriff came riding up, for he had found his horse after some little trouble, and was late in getting there.

"Dick, I'm the sheriff of this county," he began. "I want to—"

"Never mind, sheriff," was the quick reply. "I'm doin' business with Young Wild West. I reckon he's got a blamed sight more to say than you around here jest now."

"Who says so?" and the sheriff again showed his anger, at the same time looking sharply at our hero.

"I'll give you a chance, too, sheriff," our hero cried. "You wouldn't like to have it reported all through the county of the way you have conducted yourself this afternoon, would you?"

A couple of ranchmen came running up just then, and as they were particular friends of the sheriff it did not take them long to mollify him.

The result was that he came forward rather meekly and offered his hand to our hero, who gripped it and gave it a hearty shake.

Speckled Dick wanted to shake hands, too, but Wild made out that he did not notice the offer, and simply told him to go on back and join his crowd, but see to it that he behaved himself the rest of the day.

That settled the trouble.

The cowboys from Marker's Ranch quickly became used to behaving themselves, it seemed, and things passed off pleasantly the rest of the day, though, of course, there were quite a few lively incidents.

No one ever found out exactly what had caused the pumpkin to explode, but, of course, our friends knew all about it.

They had a good time along with the rest, and when the fair closed for the night they went back to the hotel.

Feeling that it would hardly be worth while to remain there another day, they left Ace High and took the trail for the mountains again, expecting to run across some lively adventures later on.

Of course, the tenderfoot was very grateful to our hero for having taken his part, and he promised to look them up again if he had a chance to do so.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST'S RISKY RIDE; OR, ARIETTA AND THE GULCH GANG."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.



## CURRENT NEWS

Charged with stealing a bicycle and clothes from the Victoria Barracks, London, Private Geoffrey Lockett, of the Second Battalion Grenadier Guards, said that in the army he was continually being told that he "could not soldier," though he tried his best. Therefore he thought the best thing for him to do was to steal and be thrown out of the army. Lockett, who was a miner in Staffordshire before joining the army, was sentenced to two months' imprisonment.

The United States Department of Agriculture is looking for plant enthusiasts to aid in the work of experimenting with the thousands of new varieties of foreign plants brought to these shores annually by the Bureau of Plant Industry. David Fairchild, in charge of this work, is preparing to send out from the Government Experiment Farm in Chico, Cal., a large number of young plants. But they will be sent only, he declared, to those people who can prove to the Government that they are genuinely interested in experimenting.

A fugitive room has been discovered at the Fferm Farm, near Mold, Flintshire, England, a building dating from the early part of the sixteenth century, and once the manor house of the Hartsheath estate. While repairing an old fireplace and chimney the workmen accidentally uncovered a revolving stone. When this was moved it revealed a hidden chamber, which had been quite unknown to the inmates of the house. The room was fitted with antique oak furniture, including a table, on which were antiquated weapons and feeding utensils, as well as the remains, withered to dust, of some food.

Three men are at work along the banks of the Peckman River, just above Cedar Grove, N. J., searching for buried treasure. They are not known to any of the villagers, and their mission was a secret until it was revealed to a man who overheard their conversation while watching them at work. One of the men is said to be the grandson of a former resident of this village who later moved to New York. The story is current in the village that he buried a large sum of money to insure himself of safety from burglars. The three strangers have been unsuccessful up to date, but they are still at work.

Dr. Henry S. Denison, twenty-eight years old, died at his home in Denver, Col., twenty minutes after he had taken a drink of bichloride of mercury by mistake. Recently his wife gave birth to a child. Dr. Denison lately had become heir to an estate of about \$1,000,000, inherited through his mother's family. He was a graduate of Johns Hopkins' Medical College. It is said that Dr. Denison, while experimenting with guinea pigs in bacteriological work in his laboratory, drank a solution of bichloride of mercury. Friends insist that it was accidental, but heart disease was first given by the family as the cause of death.

Mrs. Belle Strong, of Scarsdale, Westchester County, N. Y., got back from a conscientious burglar recently a bankbook and \$25 in cash stolen from her when she lived in Mount Hope two years ago. Her home was entered in July, 1910, while she was away on a vacation. Her bankbook was all the burglar took, although there were other valuables lying handy. He left some silverware packed up on the veranda. Mrs. Strong never got any trace of the loot until she found it under her door with an envelope containing the money and passbook. She believes the burglar's conscience bothered him.

The new wireless station at Arlington, Va., which will be completed in about two months, will act as a clock regulator for thousands of jewelers all over the country. The time as recorded at the Naval Observatory will be flashed all along the coast and as far west as the system will reach. The towers are expected to communicate with vessels 3,000 miles at sea, but the exact distance they will command overland has not been calculated to a nicety. It is believed that messages will be recorded at least 1,500 miles inland. Many large jewelry stores have notified the Navy Department that they intend to install wireless receivers so they can get the right time regularly "via wireless."

There is little change in the rate of gold production in the South African mines, the world's greatest reserve of the yellow metal. The London Economist prints the following data of recent output: "The output of gold from the mines of the Transvaal during the month of July amounted to 766,338 ounces of fine gold, valued at £3,255,198. This compares with 753,936 ounces, valued at £3,202,517, produced during the month of June, and 709,258 ounces, valued at £3,012,738, produced during the month of July, 1911. Considering the continued depletion of the native labor force, the production for July compares favorably with preceding months. The daily average output is returned as 24,721 ounces, which is lower than that recorded in either May or June."

The New Bedford, Mass., Co-operative Bank and the Acushnet Co-operative Bank were closed recently and placed in charge of bank examiners as a result of the investigation which led to the arrest the other night of Edgar Lord, treasurer of both institutions. Lord pleaded guilty in the District Court to a charge of larceny of \$40,000, the complaint alleging the taking of \$20,000 from each bank. He was held in \$25,000 bonds for a hearing September 9 and was committed to jail. Although both banks have suspended for ninety days, bank officials said after a hurried examination of the books that there will be no loss to shareholders or depositors. The only loss, they said, would be in a shrinkage of the profit accounts. The officials expressed the opinion that the real cash loss would not exceed \$25,000, part of the \$40,000 alleged to have been stolen having been paid back.



# THE SUNKEN FLEET

OR,

## WORKING FOR MILLIONS

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER I.

CARLOS M. H.

Just at evening on one of those early days of April, 1865, which witnessed the dying throes of the great Rebellion, Captain Matt Hunter, the famous naval constructor and electrician, might have been seen hurrying on board of a singular-looking craft which lay moored to one of the wharves at the Washington Navy Yard.

Positively it would have been hard for a stranger to determine the character of the vessel in question, for in appearance she seemed nothing more nor less than a huge iron cigar, with a round turret on top, inside of which a wheel could be discovered through the thick plates of glass.

This was all.

Viewed from the outside there was positively no more unless the inquirer happened to be sufficiently inquisitive to examine her stern, where the name Cyclops would have been discovered, painted in white letters upon a black ground, the port of register being New York.

Captain Matt Hunter, however, did not appear to be inquisitive, nor was there any need, since the odd craft was his latest and most important invention.

Jumping upon the steel plates which formed what may be styled the deck, he entered the turret through an opening formed by removing one of the thick panes of glass and descended by a flight of steps into the cabin.

"It's all up, Tom!" he exclaimed, flinging himself down into an arm-chair which stood before a table where Tom Hunter, his only son and heir, was busy working out a problem in navigation. "It's all up, my son, and we are ruined. I declare, it makes me fairiy sick!"

"Pop! you don't mean it!"

"But I do, though. Lee has surrendered to General Grant. The war is over, and the Secretary of the Navy has just informed me that no matter what the merits of the Cyclops may be, the Government has no use for the boat."

"By thunder! Pop, that's outrageous, after his encouraging you to go ahead and build it. It's positively too bad."

"Bad, boy, bad!" cried Captain Hunter, impatiently. "It's ruin—that's what it is. Absolute ruin. Every dollar I possess is in this undertaking. Why, I've even provisioned the Cyclops for a year. I've a great mind to commit suicide. The whole work of my life is gone."

"Nonsense, pop. Don't talk that way."

"I feel just that way. Your mother is déad, my brother is a traitor, I've wasted my time and my money. I've nothing left in this world but you. Why, I've even had notice to quit this berth in the Washington Navy Yard. We've got to get out by to-morrow morning, so the commandant says."

"It's a shame!"

"Yes, but it can't be helped. What are we going to do?"

"Well, that needs thought," replied Tom. "I—Hello! I say, Brown, father and I are busy just at present. Look in by and by, will you, if it's all the same?"

The cabin door had suddenly opened just at this juncture and a stalwart young fellow with a peculiarly intelligent countenance came bursting into the room.

He was scarcely older than Tom, though of very different appearance. In his hand he held an odd-looking metallic object well encrusted with barnacles.

It resembled a piece of stove-pipe more than anything else.

How it came on board the Cyclops will be subsequently disclosed.

"Don't send him away," said Captain Hunter, wearily, as the young man stood hesitating. "Though I engaged you for a diver, Brown, you may as well understand first as last that I won't be able to fulfill my engagement. By the way, young man, what's that thing you have in your hand?"

"Don't you recollect it?" asked Brown, holding it up.

"No, I'll be blest if I do! Hold on! I'm mistaken. You were just picking it off the bottom of New York Bay when we run you down and cut your air tube. Oh, yes; now I recollect."

"We were just going to see what's inside of it, father," said Tom, "but if you'd rather we'd put it off——"

"No, no! Do it now. I saw it kicking around outside there the other day and I was wondering what was in it, since it seems to be sealed up at both ends. Bring it here, Brown, till we see what it's like."

A close examination of the object showed it to be a copper case or cylinder, evidently hollow, and sealed at both ends.

It had a very ancient appearance, and it was quite evident that it had been under water for a long period of time.

"Lay it on the table, Charley," said the captain. "Tom,



you go fetch the ax, and I'll cut it open. Who knows? Maybe it's full of diamonds!"

"If it should be, half goes to Tom," said young Brown, decidedly. "But for his bravery I shouldn't be here now."

"Oh, pshaw!" cried Tom. "That's nonsense. I didn't do anything."

"You didn't! You only saved my life, that's all."

"I came mighty near taking it. Didn't I cut your air-tube? After that could I do anything else than what I did?"

"But there ain't one in ten thousand who would have dared to do what you did. When I saw the Cyclops coming, I thought——"

"No matter what you thought," interrupted Captain Hunter, impatiently. "Will one of you boys go for the ax, or must I go for it myself?"

The ax was promptly brought by Charlie and the copper case laid upon the floor and broken open after a few blows administered by Captain Hunter's powerful arms.

The two boys bent over the broken case eagerly.

"There ain't anything in it but a lot of paper!" cried Tom.

"Is that all?" said Charley, disappointedly. "When I picked the thing up on the bottom, just as the sharp prow of the Cyclops struck me, I thought I had found a prize."

"Let's have a look at that!" exclaimed Captain Hunter, extending his hand for a small roll of water-stained manuscript which Tom had just pulled out of the copper case.

"Why, look here, boys," he added, "this thing is as old as the hills; what's more, it ain't paper—it's parchment. It's covered with writing, too, but, confound it all, the case has leaked and two-thirds of the words are obliterated. Here's the beginning of it—why, it's in Spanish, as true as I'm alive!"

"I can read Spanish!" cried Tom, eagerly.

"I know it," replied his father. "It cost me enough to have you taught. There, Thomas, spread it out on the table and see what you can make of it. The water hasn't left us much, but I'm all curiosity to know what it's about."

In truth, there were but few lines upon the parchment which remained unobliterated.

Tom, following his father's suggestion, spread the leaves out upon the table, and, after some few moments spent in careful study, this is what he read:

"I, Carlos M. H.—(the remainder of the last name was blotted out), do hereby swear by San Jago, the Blessed Virgin and all the saints that for the man who reads these lines and has the courage to brave the horrors of that awful charnel house, there awaits a fortune greater by far than that of a dozen kings. As for me, my days are numbered. I shall never get it now, and——(here a whole page occurred which proved entirely undecipherable). Go to w. long. 57, n. lat. 20, three leagues due west from the coffin——(another break). La Reina sunk in — fathoms —— main hatch —— in the pocket of the captain, who will be readily recognized by his long, white beard —— the estimate give me by the old padre at —— gold in coin and church plate on the Isabella Catolica 2,000,000 pesos. Gold in bars on the Cristobal Colon 3,000,000 pesos.

Silver bullion on the Don Carlos 2,500,000 pesos. Silver bullion on the Roderigo——"

As for the remainder—and there were several sheets—it was all a hopeless blur; but away down at the bottom of the last was the signature: "Carlos M. H.——"

Strangely enough, the concluding letters of the last name were obliterated again.

Tom rolled up the sheets of water-stained parchment and leaned back in his chair.

During the reading neither Charley Brown nor Captain Hunter had uttered a word, but now the latter brought his fist down upon the table with a bang.

"By George, boys, there's something in that!" he exclaimed, excitedly. "If that little document don't refer to a sunken fleet of those old Spanish galleons, which during the sixteenth century used to sail from South America loaded down with treasure, it don't mean anything—you can be very sure of that."

"Do you really mean it?" cried Tom, his eyes blazing with excitement.

"Do I mean it? Of course I mean it. It's that and nothing else."

"And I say," remarked Charley Brown, quietly, "that if I should indirectly prove the means of mending your fortunes, Captain Hunter, I should be the happiest fellow in the world."

"Tom," cried his father, "what do you say? The Cyclops is provisioned for a year—she is all ready to sail at a moment's notice. We've every known appliance for diving operations on board, besides a good many that no one knows anything about but ourselves. We can run down to latitude what-do-we-call-it, longitude so-and-so in a few days, and——"

"And I say let's go!" exclaimed Tom. "Pop, will you do it?"

"Yes," replied Captain Hunter, "I will do it. As matters stand we are ruined. Our all is in this boat, Tom: it's sink or swim. We'll start this very night, and——"

"Dinner ready, gem'n!" exclaimed Ed, the steward, thrusting his woolly head through the door.

"Dinner! To the winds with dinner!" cried Tom, jumping up, in his haste overturning the chair.

"What do we want of dinner? We're working for millions now!"

## CHAPTER II.

### WHAT THE CYCLOPS WAS.

But what was the Cyclops?

How came Charley Brown and his copper case on board of the strange craft?

A few explanations are now in order.

Let us make them briefly and have done with them as soon as possible, and begin at once upon the thrilling narrative we are about to relate.

This takes us back to a certain cold morning in March, when Tom Hunter might have been seen dashing at the top of his speed through the gateway of the Grand street ferry-house—one of the busiest spots in the early morning and again at evening to be found in all New York.

(To be Continued)



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### RUSSIAN NOBLES FAST SELLING THEIR ESTATES.

Economists are of the opinion that within the next twenty years the Russian nobility will be practically a landless class. The sale of estates, chiefly to peasants or peasant land banks, goes on steadily from year to year, increasing in dimensions. The *Russkoye Slovo* newspaper, discussing this subject, gives as an example the conditions in the government of Tula. In 1871 the nobles in that province owned 1,131,201 dessiatines of landed property, a dessiatine being about two acres. On January 1, 1910, their aggregate holdings were only 558,804 dessiatines, a decrease of 40 per cent. in thirty-nine years. From 1898 to 1901 the Tula nobles sold 39,000 dessiatines; between 1901 and 1904 they sold 42,000 dessiatines; from 1904 to 1907 they sold 62,000 dessiatines, and between 1907 and January 1, 1910, they sold 89,000 dessiatines. As in Tula, so in almost every government in European Russia. The old noblesse is chiefly a thriftless, prodigal class and is getting rid of the huge estates formerly held.

### 100,000 LEAVE BRITAIN AND GO TO AUSTRALIA.

The rush of English emigrants to Australia is tremendous, and there are not enough British ships to carry the passengers. Seven hundred sailed the other day on the *Moravian* and 2,000 are on the waiting list. Many cannot wait, and prefer going to South American countries rather than remain in England. J. E. Ridgway, a shipping agent, says:

"About 100,000 Britishers are going to Australia this year. Men, and especially girls, are wanted there. At least 175,000 would have gone if accommodated."

Percy Hunter, director of the Immigration Department of New South Wales, who came to England to study shipping facilities, says the emigration is due to the success of the British farmers in Australia. He said: "Australia is starving for men. It wants 20,000,000 whites and has only 5,000,000. It must have good healthy girls. There are 200,000 more men than girls in New South Wales alone."

### HORSESHOES OF ROPE

"Rope" horseshoes have come greatly into use in German cities, according to a report by Louis G. Dreyfus, jr., United States consular assistant at Berlin. These horseshoes seem to have so much in their favor that their use may well be considered by owners of horses that are used in American cities. A strip of tarred rope about half an inch in diameter and sometimes with a metal core, inserted in a groove of the shoe, forms the distinctive feature of the "rope" horseshoe. Simple as this device seems, several patents are owned on it, and the manufacture is controlled by a syndicate having headquarters in Berlin. The rope wears down evenly with the rest of the shoe and prevents the horse from slipping on asphalt or wooden pavements. In Munich, it is said, 90 per cent.

of the hind feet and 70 per cent. of the fore feet of horses are so shod, and a special rope, containing metallic strands, is much used. Even in a level city like Chicago there is much slipping of horses on smooth pavements, and shoes that would prevent this would be merciful as well as economical. There are further advantages in the "rope" shoe, in that it deadens sound and gives comfort as well as security to the horse.

### TREES 4,000 YEARS OLD.

Full information regarding the Sequoia and General Grant National Parks, which contain the oldest and largest trees in the world, is contained in a circular just issued by the Department of the Interior. Within these parks, there are more than 12,000 trees exceeding ten feet in diameter. In the giant forest in the Sequoia National Park the principal trees are the General Sherman, 286 feet high and 36 feet in diameter; the Abraham Lincoln, 270 feet high and 31 feet in diameter, and the William McKinley, 291 feet high and 28 feet in diameter. In the General Grant Park the principal trees are the General Grant, 264 feet high and 35 feet in diameter, and the George Washington, 255 feet high and 29 feet in diameter. These big trees are the oldest living things in the world, four thousand annual wood rings having been counted on one of the fallen giants in the Sequoia Park. The great pines of the Pacific Coast are old in their fourth or fifth century, when the big trees growing beside them are still in the "bloom of youth," as they do not attain great size before their fifteen hundredth year or become old in less than three thousand years.

### WASTE IN COAL MINES.

Dr. Joseph A. Holmes, director of the United States Bureau of Mines, makes the startling statement in a bulletin just issued that during the last year one-half as much coal has been wasted or rendered unfit for use as has been mined and put on the market. In view of this he thinks it is high time that more vigorous efforts should be made to reduce this enormous waste not only in coal, but in minerals generally. This is the purpose of investigations now under way by the experts of the bureau, which investigations are made the subject of a bulletin by Chas. L. Parsons, entitled "Notes on Mineral Waste." In his preface to the bulletin Dr. Holmes says:

During the last year in producing 500,000,000 tons of coal we wasted or left underground in such condition that it probably will not be recovered in the future 250,000,000 tons of coal; we turned loose into the atmosphere a quantity of natural gas larger than the total output of artificial gas during the same period in all the towns and cities of the United States and we also wasted or lost in the mining preparation and treatment of other important metalliferous and non-metalliferous minerals from 10 to 15 per cent. of the year's production of such minerals.



# KIT CARSON'S CHUM

OR,

## A BOY'S FIGHT WITH REDSKINS

BY COL. RALPH FENTON

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER XIX. (Continued)

Budd was an experienced woodsman, and taking his bearings he was able to make a bee line for the village, despite the difficulties of the country, and without the aid of either the moon or the stars.

The later he reached the village the better, in some respects, as it would be quieter and there wouldn't be the same danger of his approach being discovered by prowling dogs or strolling children.

Keeping on with greater caution as he neared the village, the boy scout finally told his comrades to wait for him, and then made his way rapidly and with scarcely any noise toward the sleeping village.

Not a rustle of a leaf, not a snapping of a twig betrayed him, had there been any one there to hear, and at last he found himself on the edge of the village.

All was still as he entered, but here and there he could see the dark form of a sentinel pacing to and fro, and he became even more cautious than before.

Dropping to the ground, he worked his way slowly and cautiously, and without the slightest noise, toward a line of tents, which arose against the sky plainly outlined in the dim light.

There was no sound to be heard in any of them, but as he drew nearer he heard the soft hum of voices, and paused so as to locate it.

It seemed to come from a lodge larger than its fellows and somewhat to the right, and stealing forward till the lodge was between him and the silent sentinel he arose, ran lightly a few yards, and then sank down just in the rear of the skin tepee and listened.

"You are a white girl?" he heard, and at once recognized the voice as Betty's.

"Yes, white, same you. Indian no white, you white, me white. You come live here, same me?"

"How long have you lived with the Indians?" Budd heard Betty ask, and he listened eagerly for the reply.

"How long?" asked the other voice inquiringly.

"Yes; for how long a time? How many years or months?"

"How many moons be with Indians?" asked the girl.

"Yes, how many moons? Do you remember when you came?"

"Many moon, so many me think not know how many moon."

"How did you come to be among the Indians?"

"How come? Come horse this place, one time in other place, then one time in other place, go canoe."

"What is your name?"

"Name? What that?"

"How are you called?"

"How call?"

"Yes, what do they say to you when they want you?"

The girl repeated something in the Indian tongue, and Betty said:

"What is your name in English—in the paleface talk? Don't you know that? What is your real name? Can't you remember?"

"What me call before come among Indians?"

"Yes; what were you called before you came with the Indians?"

The girl seemed to be thinking deeply, and at last she answered:

"Not know that. Name Blue Eyes. He knows that."

"Blue Eyes? Yes, the Indians call you that, but can't you remember your own name?"

Budd was greatly excited, and he would have spoken to Betty, but he feared that the strange white girl might feel friendly toward the Indians and betray him.

"You are not happy here?" asked Betty. "You would like to return to your own people? You are not like the Indians; you miss something in their life which you once enjoyed? You wish to return?"

"All paleface good, same you?" asked the other.

"There are many good people among the whites," said Betty. "I wish to return. If my friends come for me, will you go with me?"

"Sh!" said the other. "Some one come; paleface with black heart. Him bad paleface. Indian not so bad. Indian hate white man with black heart."

Budd heard a step outside and crouched close to the tepee, although he was in the shadow and could not be seen.

At the next moment he heard Bill Hanford's voice from within and drew closer than ever so as to miss nothing.

### CHAPTER XX.

#### A DESPERATE ACT.

"What is this girl doing here?" demanded the renegade.

"She is my guest; she is here to keep me company."

"I won't have her here. Send her away. I want to talk to you alone."

"I will not," said Betty; "and I do not wish to talk to you."



"Are you ready to be my wife?"

"No."

"Your friends will never find you here."

"Even so, I will not disgrace myself by being the wife of a vile traitor like yourself," retorted Betty, with spirit.

"You'd better, if you know what's good for you. Do you know that this miserable chief, Red Wolf, has his eyes on you, and that if you don't marry me you will be forced to marry him?"

"Even that would be preferable to being your wife. Leave me. Your presence is distasteful. I tell you now and for all time I will not listen to you."

"You may have to," snarled Hanford, angrily. "I am not to be trifled with, I tell you. Come, give me a kiss to show that I am to hope."

"No, no! I will not let you sully my lips with—no, no! I say—help!"

At the first cry Budd had leaped to his feet, and now he was at the entrance to the lodge.

The flap was thrown aside, and he saw that a small fire on the ground in the middle of the enclosed spaces gave both heat and light.

He sprang in just as the renegade was about to draw the girl toward him, having already seized her in his arms.

"Stop that, you infernal sneak and skunk!" he cried, striking the man a heavy blow on the side of the jaw which nearly felled him.

"Budd!" cried Betty, breaking away from the scoundrel and rushing into the boy's arms. "You have come to save me?"

"Yes, and I will. Stand aside, you pesky sneak."

"Budd Braddon here!" gasped Hanford, staggering toward the entrance. "Take her away, will you? Not if I know it?"

In an instant he uttered a shrill cry which he repeated several times in quick succession, the sound echoing again and again through the streets of the silent village.

Then it was repeated in many directions, lights flashed in all quarters, hurried footsteps were heard, dogs barked, children screamed, young men shouted, and in a moment the death-like stillness of the place changed to the veriest pandemonium.

Budd seized Betty in his arms, sprang to the door of the tent, struck Hanford a stinging blow that felled him to the ground and then fled.

The alarm had been too general, however, and he saw at once that it would be impossible to escape.

"Leave me; make your own escape, and then return for me with my father and friends," said Betty, excitedly. "You will only be taken if you remain."

The boy would not have it, however, and as the Indians rushed upon him from all sides he attacked them fiercely, and had there been fewer of them would undoubtedly have escaped.

There were too many of them, however, and he was speedily overpowered, but at the same time two or three shots were heard, and two of his foes fell dead.

Then he heard the signal agreed upon by himself and Carson, and repeated it to let the scout know that he heard.

Then in a moment there were other shots, and more

Apaches came hurrying forward, crying that the pale-faces had attacked them.

"We are ten to one!" cried Hanford, furiously. "Beat them back! Are you women that you are afraid of a handful of whites?"

The war cry rang out, and was repeated again and again, but no other whites appeared, and Budd was dragged away, the angry Indians demanding his blood.

He was taken to a small, square building one story high, built of stout stakes, and roofed over with the same, and thrown on the ground to be left till the maddened Apaches were ready to dispose of him.

There was a rude door to the place, fastened with a heavy bar on the outside, and this was now closed, the only light that the place had entering through chinks in the roof.

Two men were placed in front of the door, and others marched around it continually, their footsteps being plainly heard by the unfortunate boy as he lay in his narrow prison.

"This is about the tightest hole I ever got in," he mused, "but I ain't goin' ter give up while there's the least bit o' hope. I'm Kit Carson's chum, and he ain't goin' to leave me here if there's any way to get me out.

"Bill Hanford thinks he's got the upper hand of me now, but we'll see whether he has or not. That lyin' skunk Red Wolf thinks he's got me, too, but let me have my freedom for long enough and I'll kill him, if they tear me to pieces for it the next minute."

The noise in the village grew less and less, and at last died out, but the sound of his guard's footsteps continued to be heard regularly, and Budd knew that there was no chance of escape.

He was without weapons of any kind, and the walls of his prison were too solid for him to break through, and the roof too high to reach.

"I ain't givin' up till the last minute," he murmured, as he lay listening to the steady footfall of the men outside. "I've seen Miss Betty, and if I was to die now I'd have that to think of, and know that I done my best to spare her. If it comes to a fight for my life, I'll do all I can, but my friends won't stand around and do nothin'. I'm sure."

In the early morning, almost before daybreak, the door was thrown open, and Bill Hanford was seen standing just outside, flanked by a dozen scowling Apaches.

"You've got a little while left, young feller," snarled the man. "Was the party we saw in the village the whole of you, or was there more?"

"There'll be enough comin' to keep you busy before long," answered the boy.

"If they do, it won't help you any. You're goin' to die at sunrise. They're gettin' the stake ready now, so you better say yer prayers."

"And you'd let 'em murder a white man and stand by and see 'em?" asked Budd.

"Yes," laughed Hanford.

Then, with a cry like that of a wild beast, Budd leaped to his feet, sprang at the man's throat with the fury of a savage wolf, and bore him to the ground.

(To be Continued)



## TIMELY TOPICS

The three children—triplets, and all girls—of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Almand, of Vidalia, Ga., named respectively Margaret, Eleanor and Jessie, after the three daughters of Governor Woodrow Wilson, are each the recipients of \$5 in gold from the New Jersey executive with which to start savings accounts. The youngsters are doing well.

One of the oddest wills ever offered for probate is that of Edwin S. Wilson, of Morristown, N. J. After directing that the income of his estate, the value of which is not stated, be paid to his widow, the testator provided that after her death \$200 be set aside each year for a vacation for his son William, which he must take unaccompanied by his wife or any other relatives. It is further directed that a certified statement as to how the vacation money is spent must be filed with the trustee before subsequent payments are made.

While handcuffed together Melvin Jewell and John Adam, convicts from the Montana State Penitentiary, who were being returned from Big Timber, Mont., where they had been taken as witnesses, escaped from detectives by jumping from a Southern Pacific train traveling thirty miles an hour. The men dove through a window and rolled down a steep embankment. The spot where they escaped is a wild one, near the main divide of the Rocky Mountains, where two overland Northern Pacific trains were held up by bandits about five years ago. Two posses with bloodhounds are in pursuit, but no trace of the men has been discovered.

Several Chinese brigands lately attacked a running train in Fayuen, on the line from Canton to Hankow. The engineer, in spite of a hail of bullets, refused to put on the brakes. Several trainmen and passengers were wounded and the cars were damaged badly. When the train reached the market town of Ngwo it was found impossible to proceed further, as the rails had been torn up. The town had been sacked by the brigands, many of whom are discharged soldiers. They are increasing in numbers daily. Troops have been rushed from Canton to stop their depredations.

"And the body shall be cast into the sea." Mindful of the Americans' burial service, Captain Stephen Castle, known wherever mariners foregather, directed in his will that his body be cremated and that the ashes be carried through the Golden Gate, San Francisco, and there scattered on the bottom of the ocean he loved. For fifty years Stephen Castle had been a pilot: for thirty-five years he had guided deep-sea ships across the bar and through the Golden Gate. Recently he died, and the son Kent carried the father's ashes aboard the pilot boat California. There were no mourners but himself and no attendants but the crew of the California. Beyond the bar the ashes were cast upon the sea.

A circumstantial story of the capture of a living sea serpent comes from Sicily. It is reported that fishermen saw the monster swimming rapidly up the straits, following a party of English tourists. The fishermen with great difficulty hauled the serpent ashore in nets at Tremestieri. It weighs nearly 700 pounds. The body is six feet long and tail six feet seven inches, terminating in a pig-like curl. The average thickness of the body is twenty inches. The head has two huge, ear-like fins with eyes between them, and a rectangular mouth. The skin is smooth. Scientists are unable to classify the creature, which is being publicly exhibited.

Mrs. Isabel Worreil Ball left Washington for Los Angeles the other day to attend the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, where she will lead a movement to secure laws to stop the desertion of the American flag. Mrs. Ball is chairman of the National Committee on Prevention of the Desecration of the Flag of the Women's Relief Corps, Grand Army of the Republic, and expects to reveal several sensations, the result of investigations made by herself and colleagues. She will report many instances where the flag and other emblems of the United States are used as trade-marks for advertising cigars, liquors and other things, despite laws already passed by Congress and by the state legislatures.

The largest work of subway construction now being carried on in this world is that being done below Lexington avenue, in this city. The line, which will be four-track throughout its entire length, is about 10 miles long. Eight of the 10 miles are now under active construction, and the total cost of the work on this 8 miles alone will be over \$35,000,000. Over 3,000 men are engaged on this section. Work is also being prosecuted on the four-mile, four-track subway on Fourth avenue, Brooklyn, and the Center street loop subway is being completed. Altogether on the three systems there is now under contract about \$61,000,000 worth of work, covering 13½ miles of four-track roads.

Herbert L. Bridgman of Brooklyn announced that he had received a telegram from Henry G. Bryant, President of the Philadelphia Geographical Society, giving the first news of Mr. Bryant's exploring trip in Labrador. Mr. Bryant left this city June 22 last, and St. Augustine, Labrador, July 12, for a reconnaissance in a part of Labrador never before travelled by a white man. Mr. Bryant returned to St. Augustine and a long telegram was received by Mr. Bridgman, in part as follows: "The expedition was the first to explore and map the St. Augustine River from the sea to its source, a distance of 141 miles. We traversed a region fairly timbered, but unsuited to agriculture. The topographical results are important and will essentially change the maps of the river."



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## GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

"Four thousand horses, representing a cash value of nearly \$500,000, have died in twenty-six counties of Kansas," said J. H. Mercer, State Livestock Sanitary Commissioner, recently, in discussing the strange disease that has attacked horses in this State. "At the present rate," he said, "the whole of Kansas in a few days will be included in its ravages, and there is nothing to insure it staying within the State boundaries."

As an outcome of the Titanic inquiry the Board of Trade, of London, has issued revised rules for increasing the safety of lives at sea. The rules become effective on January 1. They provide that foreign-going ships carrying passengers shall be required to furnish complete life-boat accommodations for all on board. It may be necessary to obtain further legislative action in order to make adequate boat drill compulsory and secure crews to man the boats properly.

Ad Wolgast, lightweight champion of the world, sustained apparently severe injury to his arm recently while cranking his automobile. A physician declared the accident will probably keep Wolgast out of the ring for a month or six weeks, which, if true, means that his proposed match with "Packey" MacFarland in New York this month must be postponed. As soon as possible Wolgast's injured arm will be placed under an X-ray. The fighter cried bitterly while being treated in a doctor's office, more from disappointment than pain.

Helena, Ark., boasts of the oldest benedict in this State, this fact being settled for all time when Sandy Alexander, 111 years old, recently applied for a marriage certificate. His bride, Susie McGhee, confessed to but half a century of single blessedness. "Uncle Sandy," as he is known, claims to have been born in 1801, and says that he was hostler to President James K. Polk, being a grown man at that time, and the father of three children. The story of the old negro with regard to his age is strengthened by the statement of many of the older white citizens here, who aver that when they were boys they recall distinctly that the old negro was referred to even then as "Old Man Sandy."

Confessing that she committed two burglaries, Marjorie Lockett, fifteen years old, was arrested at Walden, N. Y., September 5, by Chief of Police Ronk. The girl acknowledged that recently she entered a boarding-house in Washington Place by removing a pane of glass from a window and stole several garments. The other afternoon Marjorie admits she gained entrance into another house in Washington street by cutting the slats in the shutter with a saw and secured a sum of money. She hid herself behind a dresser when she heard persons approaching. It developed that the police were searching for the girl they had traced to this house, but they neglected to look behind the dresser. Fearing discovery, the girl remained behind the dresser for fourteen hours. The following morning at 5 o'clock she made her escape. She says she stole to get money to buy new clothes.

## GRINS AND CHUCKLES

She—My first husband was a drummer. He—What happened to him? She—He beat it.

Sillicus—Do you believe in long engagements? Cynicus—Sure! The longer a man is engaged, the less time he has to be married.

"I am very observant, sir, and from the way you winced when I stamped on your foot, I conclude you have pedal afflictions." "Say no more. I acknowledge the corn."

Indecision—"These are the days when the young divinity student who has a good delivery must undergo a terrific mental struggle." "About what?" "Whether to preach or pitch."

"Mister Interlocutor, can you tell me why a horse never gets hungry between meals?" "No, I cannot, Mr. Bones. Why is it that a horse never gets hungry between meals?" "Because he always has a bit in his mouth."

"I have brought you your engagement ring." "Oh, isn't that lovely. But look, this diamond has a flaw in it." "I know, but you shouldn't notice that." "Why?" "Because you're in love, and love is blind." "Yes, but not stone-blind."

Two Irishmen were among a class that was being drilled in marching tactics. One was new at the business and, turning to his companion, asked him the meaning of the command "Halt!" "Why," said Mike, "when he says 'Halt' you bring the foot that's on the ground to the foot that's in the air and remain motionless."

The great auditorium was packed and the audience cheered in its enthusiasm. "What's going on?" we asked a doorman. "This is a Reform meeting," he replied. "But I thought that this town had had enough of Reform," we stated, in surprise. "It has," returned the doorman. "This meeting has been called for the purpose of reforming the reformers."



## THE SIEGE OF LONE RANCH.

By Paul Braddon.

"Well, this is a quiet reception, I must say, and after my writing brother Dick, telling him I should arrive at Lone Ranch to-day."

Jack Bainbridge, just home from a three-years' cruise on an American man-o'-war, drew rein on the edge of the clearing in Oklahoma as he spoke. Before him lay the beautiful plains and meadows of one of the finest sites for a cattle ranch in all Oklahoma. Certainly the Indian name was a most appropriate one, since it meant "beautiful land."

Jack was a young man of twenty-five, and he wore the costume of a seaman, a handsomely-mounted sword, which he had received as a reward for bravery in the southern seas, hung at his side, and the whole personnel of the sailor told he was a strong and daring fellow.

Having reached Kansas City, Jack had pressed on to the Pawnee Agency up the river, despite the warnings he had received that a large band of the hostile Apaches had invaded that part of Oklahoma.

Jack was anxious to see his brother Dick, who had established Lone Ranch, as his home in Oklahoma was called, because of its isolated situation, some two years previously.

At the Pawnee Agency Jack was told that scouts had brought in the news that the Apaches had fled southward, and crossed the line into New Mexico.

Jack was pleased to hear the Apaches had fled southward, for he had been somewhat anxious on his brother's account, because of the raid of the hostiles.

Jack pressed on alone for Lone Ranch. The trail was a plain one. He received full instructions as to the situation of the ranch, and we have seen that he found it without difficulty.

But as Jack pulled up his horse—a wiry, native mustang—at the confines of his brother's land, he could not help wondering why it all was so silent there, and looking intently he saw the ranch-house, with the adjacent cattle-pens and outhouses half a mile away, but could not discern any evidence of life about it. Not a single human creature was visible, and there were no cattle in sight.

Reaching the house, a substantial log structure, square in form and provided with loopholes in the walls of the first story instead of windows, he secured his horse and went to the closed door.

There he rapped, but there was no answer, and he found the door was locked. Jack shook his head in a puzzled way, but he rapidly made the transit of the house, and coming to the front after satisfying himself there was no other door, he put his shoulders against it, and being a powerful fellow, after some effort he succeeded in breaking the lock. The door opened and Jack went in.

He had just satisfied himself by a hurried inspection that the house was deserted, and that evidently its inmates had fled in great haste, when he heard a light footstep at the door, to which his back was turned. Wheeling like a flash, he beheld a beautiful Indian girl standing in the door.

"How, white man, how! I am Red Fawn, the Pawnee,

daughter of White Thunder, the big chief. Apache dogs took Red Fawn a prisoner yesterday. But she escaped and now the Apaches are close on her trail—many warriors, and they are coming here!" cried the Pawnee princess, breathlessly, and without waiting for the young sailor to question her.

As the last words fell from her lips a frightful chorus of Indian yells rang out near at hand. The sailor leaped to the door and looked forth.

Jack sprang back and closed the door. Beside it stood two great oaken bars, and seeing the heavy iron loops in the frame on either side of the door, which were made for the reception of the bars, he hastily thrust them in place, and thus secured the portal.

"Big lodge heap strong. Pawnee girl chief's daughter. Help paleface warrior fight. Maybe Black Eagle make some stratagem to throw dust in the eyes of Apache dogs and save Red Fawn yet," said the red maiden, bravely.

"And who's Black Eagle?" asked Jack, drawing his revolver and springing to a loop-hole near the door.

Black Eagle, young Pawnee chief; great brave. Heap cunning; much hate Apache foes. He Red Fawn promised husband. He know Left Hand, big Apache chief, steal Red Fawn to make her his own squaw."

Two shots from Jack's weapons rang out just then, and screams of rage and pain from the two foremost of the reckless-charging savages told that his bullets had done execution.

One of them fell from his pony, the other sank upon the neck of his mount, but he was badly wounded.

In a moment he and the other redskins were urging their animals out of range and then they began to circle the house.

"If we only had rifles and ammunition we might hold the reds off—for a while at least. I wonder why Brother Dick deserted the ranch?" said Jack.

"Me know. Me friend of white ranchman; me often been here with Black Eagle who heap big friend of ranchman Dick. Him hear the Apache on raid. So him and his cowboys go away an' drive cattle with them to big, strong ranch up north some twenty miles," replied Red Fawn.

"Oh! That explains it!"

"An' Red Fawn knows where ranchman Dick keep guns."

"What? You're a trump! Show me where Dick keeps his spare arms, though it may be he's taken them with him."

"Red Fawn go see."

The Indian girl sprang to a trap-door in the floor, which Jack had not observed. Opening it, she revealed a space about five feet long and three feet deep.

Jack bounded to her, and an exclamation of delight fell from his lips as he saw four rifles and a good supply of ammunition in the hiding-place.

Quickly he got out the rifles and ammunition, and upon examining the four guns, he found they were all loaded and ready for use.

The Apaches were circling nearer and nearer to the house, and Jack and the Pawnee maid opened fire on them,



Quickly their rifles were emptied, and then each seized another weapon.

Again Jack and the Pawnee girl opened fire, and the charging Indians were once more compelled to fall back.

But now the weapons of the defenders were empty, and Jack had barely reloaded one rifle, when he saw the determined red fiends were making ready to come on again.

"Now, Red Fawn, you keep the rifles loaded, and I'll do the firing!" cried Jack.

Soon she had two of the three rifles Jack had left to her loaded. One of the weapons she placed on a rude table near the loop-hole at which Jack remained, the second she stood up beside it. Then she sprang behind Jack, and, resting on one knee, she began to reload the third weapon.

Just in the rear of Red Fawn's position there was a partition separating the two lower rooms of the ranch-house. In that partition there was a large opening, or window, which could be closed with a slide, but which was now open. A large barrel could be seen standing in the inner room. From that apartment a flight of stairs led to the second story. We particularize because of what is to ensue.

Somewhat to Jack's surprise the Apaches suddenly fell back to the edge of the timber. He communicated this to Red Fawn.

For some time nothing was seen of the enemy. But at length they reappeared, and a dozen of them were seen to be on foot.

They had made a movable frame of saplings which they had cut in the woods and knitted together with vines, forming a shield to turn a bullet, and they had made a sort of rack, extending across the whole front of the shield, in which they had placed a large quantity of punk from dead trees. This they had fired.

The Indians advanced.

The defenders of the lone ranch could only see a dense cloud of black smoke.

"I can't understand, gal, why the reds have set up that movable shield. But, since it will probably of itself serve to shield them from our bullets, why should they take the pains to make the great smoke?" said Jack.

"Red Fawn can't say. She know, though, Apaches have some cunning trick to work by big smoke," replied the Indian girl, looking much perplexed.

And still the cloud of smoke came on, like a harbinger of certain doom for the besieged, and at length Jack judged the shield of the Apaches was within range of his rifle.

Then he opened fire.

He worked the triggers of his repeating weapon with the utmost rapidity, and he did not cease until he had discharged every bullet the weapon contained at the enemy.

But it seemed he had accomplished nothing.

With derisive yells, as if to taunt the white man, the Indians came on.

There was a loop-hole in the center of the door, and Jack sprang to it.

"Here I make my death fight, gal. If you ever see my brother, tell him how I died," he said, earnestly.

In a moment his rifle began to speak. The Indians with the movable frame were close to the house. The black smoke from the burning punk blinded the inmates. It came through the loop-holes into the house, too.

Suddenly a shout went up from Jack.

At last the green wood comprising the frame that shielded the Indians had taken fire from the punk in the frame across the front of it. The frame burst into flames.

The Indians were compelled to drop the shield. As they did so they charged madly at the ranch-house with a battering ram which they carried with them.

But Red Fawn placed a second rifle in Jack's hand, and he blazed away through the loop-holes in the door. The Indians, to the number of four, fell under his deadly fire, and then the others dropped the battering-ram and fled.

Then Red Fawn cried:

"What's that? Ha! Apache on roof!"

Jack and the Indian maid turned to the window in the partition which communicated with the next room. At the same instant they saw a hideously-painted Apache leap from the foot of the stairs and glide behind the large barrel, which has been alluded to.

Jack's rifle sprang to his shoulder. At the same moment the Indian thrust the muzzle of his gun from behind the barrel and fired. Jack uttered a terrible cry and fell to the floor.

The Apache bounded forward with his tomahawk and knife in hand, meaning to scalp his victim.

Red Fawn snatched up a loaded rifle, took a quick aim at the murderous redskin and pulled the trigger, but the weapon was not discharged.

It failed at the most critical instant. The Apache sprang upon the girl and struck her to the floor with his fist.

But just then a rifle cracked in the inner room, and the Apache fell dead beside Jack with a bullet in his heart.

Over the ledge of the great window in the partition bounded a second seeming Apache with his smoking rifle in his hand.

He it was who had killed the savage who meant to scalp Jack. Red Fawn sprang to her feet, and, snatching up another rifle, she leveled it at the second warrior.

"Hold!" he shouted. "Me Black Eagle dressed and painted like Apache dog to get among them to help save Red Fawn!"

The next moment the Pawnee maiden, who knew her lover's voice, was clasped in his arms. Jack staggered to his feet.

Explanations quickly ensued. Black Eagle said he had personated one of the Apaches whom he had slain the preceding night, and gone on ahead of a large force of Pawnees who were on the trail of the Apaches. He and the Apache he had shot had been chosen to seek to get into the ranch-house by the roof. In conclusion, he said that the Pawnees ought surely to arrive within an hour.

But all three were soon called upon to repulse another charge of the enemy. The battle was raging fiercely, and the Apaches seemed determined to take the ranch-house by storm this time, when the Pawnees, who had followed their trail, suddenly charged upon them from the woods. The battle that ensued was short and furious. But the Apaches were defeated with great loss, and the survivors were glad to flee with their lives.

With the Pawnees, Jack went back to Pawnee Agency, and there he met his brother, who had come there to meet him after he set out for Lone Ranch.



## NEWS OF THE DAY

The exhibits of old coins at the annual convention of the American Numismatists' Association of Rochester, N. Y., are valued at \$2,000,000. Included in the collections is the only extant 1804 dollar, valued at \$3,600, owned by Henry O. Granberg of Colorado, who brought his collection of coins to Rochester in a trunk. Numismatists say that the present exhibit is the greatest and most complete ever made.

A remarkable case of a woman coming back to life after being buried as dead has occurred at Tonbridge, Kent, England. The woman, whose name was King, suffered from consumption, and apparently died from that complaint. She was placed in a coffin, and the funeral was arranged. The day before the funeral her brother was in the next room in attendance on his mother, when he heard a noise in the adjoining apartment, and on entering was startled to find his sister sitting upright in her coffin. She died two days later.

Fung Bue, said to have been the pioneer Chinese aviator, was killed when the biplane fell 200 feet while he was giving an exhibition in his native city, Canton. A clever mechanic, Fung Bue showed unusual initiative and daring in aviation. More than five years ago in Europe he took up the study of aerial navigation and soon became an expert. He built a biplane that embodied several new principles. Fung's fame quickly reached China and the Manchu Government engaged him to teach aviation to army and navy officers. With the fall of the dynasty Fung lost his position. Since then he had been travelling throughout China giving exhibitions.

England is again about to make an effort to recapture the Harnsworth cup for motor boats, which is now held in America. Four boats have been built, and of these the fastest is the "Maple Leaf IV," a 40-foot boat, with engines of about 500 horse-power. In a contest recently held, the "Maple Leaf," over a 33-knot course, maintained the remarkable speed of over 20.03 knots or about 46 miles an hour. Considering the length of the course this is certainly an extraordinary speed; and in view of the fact that several boats have been built in this country which are credited with equally high speed (that is to say, if the newspaper reports are correct), we may look for an excellent contest in the near future.

Strawberries of new and unique qualities such as the world has nowhere else are now fruiting at Pattersburg at the experimental place of Albert F. Etter, Humboldt, Cal., who is known now as the "strawberry wizard." Five thousand hybrids embracing the blood of several species never before used in strawberry breeding are now fruiting for the first time. Among them are to be found many new flavors and new quality varieties. More than 100 varieties of promise have already been marked and recorded, and will be propagated and given further trial.

One of these is a berry of deepest blood-red, exceedingly tender, juicy and of delicious flavor, surpassing any variety Etter has heretofore produced. The plant contains the blood of five species and is of great vigor and produces well.

"The American Museum of Natural History, New York, has just received a telegram from V. Stefansson, who has been conducting an ethnological and zoological expedition and was sent by way of the revenue cutter Bear to Nome and thence to Seattle. It states that Stefansson arrived at Point Barrow, Alaska, June 13. He reports that he devoted the winter to studies of the linguistics of the Eskimo, and the summer to excavation of ancient village sites. He has collected 50,000 archaeological specimens. Stefansson reports that Anderson and the eastern collections, that is collections from the Coppermine River region, will be due in San Francisco next November. Earlier reports from Stefansson announce the discovery of Eskimos who have never seen a white man."

When Miss Ethel May Sturgis was tying stationery with ribbons for a local papetrie concern, in Springfield, Mass., a few months ago, she wrote her name and address on a piece of paper and slipped it into a box of especially fine stationery. In course of time she received a letter from the purchaser of the stationery, Clifford C. Forman, of Orting, Wash. She answered the letter, whereupon Forman proposed marriage and was accepted, with the proviso that if Miss Sturgis did not like his appearance the engagement was off. Forman arrived at the Sturgis home on a recent evening. He called again the next day, and the day following procured a marriage license. Mr. Forman and Miss Sturgis were married an hour after the expiration of the five days which the law requires must elapse between the time a marriage license is issued and the ceremony is performed. They are now on their way to Washington. The bride is nineteen years of age and the bridegroom twenty-nine.

Christmas Island, the original "Treasure Island" of Robert Louis Stevenson's great story and around which many another less famous tale of piracy, treasure and blackbirding has been written, on whose coral shores lie the skeletons of many a wreck, has been sold to a German syndicate for a mid-Pacific depot for steamships. The price is said to be \$272,000 cash. Father Rougier, vendor and vendee of islands, negotiated the deed by which the Greig family disposed of all its interests in Christmas Island. William Greig, a member of the family which is known all over the Pacific, was educated in Honolulu. Until recently he had not visited that city for eight years, and his visit this time will be very brief, for he will leave for San Francisco on the Wilhelmina. Contained in a little hand satchel which he carried are the documents which will give the new owners their title to the copra island.



## INTERESTING ARTICLES

### NEW TRICK IN BASEBALL.

The new "enunciator" which Charles H. Ebbets is now testing in Washington Park, Brooklyn, N. Y., has proved itself a distinct success and will, in all probability, be installed in Ebbets Field when the new home of the Brooklyn Baseball Club is finished, some time this month. By means of this useful little instrument the "fans" will be able to follow every move of the game. The decisions of the umpires on balls and strikes are announced; also the players, as they come to the bat, are called out. This, in the opinion of the visitors at the game the other day, is the greatest convenience of all. On the score cards the names of two or more players often appear for one position, and generally there is much confusion as to who is playing and who not.

Depending from the posts in the grandstand are numerous little megaphone horns, which are connected with the press box by telephone wires. In the press box is a sort of telephone, before which a man sits and calls off the men as they come to the bat, and all other incidents of the game. The announcements are made from all the horns simultaneously.

### WOMAN LOCKED OUT OF HOME BY BURGLAR.

Mrs. Frederick Crane, of Scarsdale, N. Y., was locked out of her home by a burglar early the other day, and had to sit on her doorstep until nearly daylight. She had been to the theater with friends and reached home just after midnight. She tried to open the door with her key, but found the lock stuffed.

She rang the doorbell repeatedly, but got no response. She tried the rear door, and the windows, but they were securely fastened. She knew her husband, who had the rear door key, would be late in getting home, so she sat on the veranda. She was there two hours when she heard a racket in the yard. She was afraid to venture there. She hid in the corner of the veranda until Mr. Crane came at 3:30 o'clock. When they got inside they found a bedroom and the dining-room topsy-turvey. Silverware and other valuables were gone.

Later when they looked out of the open bedroom window, they saw a bag filled with the loot on the lawn. In jumping the burglar dropped them and made so much noise he dared not stop to pick them up.

### BRITISH FLEET TARGET OF GERMAN ZEPPELINS.

Germany's military party is excited about the vast possibilities of the wonderful flights the latest Zeppelin airships have recently disclosed.

It is naturally a matter of great and comprehensible pride that airships such as the Victoria Luise should have made 100 flights without the least hitch or, like the Schwaben, should have beaten an express train speed between Frankfort and Magdeburg.

From a military point of view, there is strong reason to think that the latest achievements have almost decided

the General Staff to alter all present provisions dealing with mobilization in case of war.

New regulations are now being remodelled in absolute secrecy in the Berlin offices of the War Ministry under the supervision of the Kaiser and General Von Heeringen, the war minister, and Count Zeppelin, the "commodore of Germany's aerial fleet," is often consulted on this all-important matter.

All of these authorities seem confident that if war is declared between England and Germany, the first blow struck by Germany will not be struck by her dreadnoughts. But as soon as war is declared, and possibly before, Germany's best Zeppelins will be ordered secretly to Portsmouth and Portland. The airships will travel at night over Belgium and Holland and will, if nothing untoward happens on the voyage, fly over the British fleet before any one is aware of their presence. That these Zeppelins will carry all the ammunition they possibly can take along, and especially the most destructive bombs and shells, is already decided. One can already foresee what havoc the simple dropping of these bombs will cause among the British battle fleet.

### WORE OUT 1,054 SHOES.

Bronzed by the sun and wind of many climes through which he has been wandering for twelve years, Juan D. Llaveria, a lean and rugged Spaniard, visited the Battery, New York, the other day on his way to the Spanish Consulate.

When January of next year rolls around the traveller will have 800,000 francs to his credit—enough to keep him in luxury in Spain for the rest of his life. The Baron Rothschild, who sent him on his world traversing journey in January, 1900, with only \$2 in his pocket, will pay the Spaniard his well-earned prize.

Juan, who is forty, agreed, with two other Europeans, an Austrian and an Italian, to walk around the world and visit the places assigned to them in the remarkable itinerary devised by the Baron Rothschild. They were to stop at many cities and remote villages in all the countries of the world, and were to cover the long jaunt in not less than thirteen years. They were not allowed to beg, borrow or steal, but they could work during their wanderings for clothing, shelter and food. The Italian, Constantini, fell a victim of love in a cannibal camp in Africa, and was eventually consigned to the tribe's stew pot. Jartnes, the Austrian, died of fever in Mexico recently, and the last competitor of Llaveria was forever out of the contest.

Llaveria came here from Mexico in keeping with the Rothschild itinerary. He still has about four months of walking ahead of him. He has worn out 527 pairs of shoes, and has several large scrap books filled with autographs and consular seals from thousands of cities and villages.

The Spaniard did not beg, borrow or steal, but he lectured about his enterprise and has much more money today than he had twelve years ago.



**GIANT SAW  
PUZZLE.**

This puzzle contains twenty-one pieces of wood nicely finished; take them apart and put them together same as illustrated. Everybody would like to try it, as it is very fascinating. Price, by mail, postpaid, 25c. each.

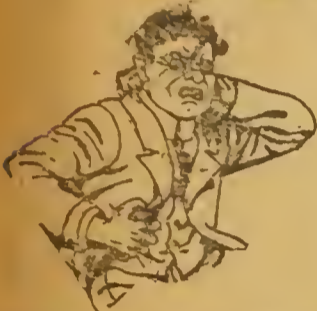
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

**DELUSION TRICK.**

A magic little box in three parts that is very mystifying to those not in the trick. A coin placed on a piece of paper disappears by dropping a nickel ring around it from the magic box. Made of hard wood two inches in diameter. Price, 12c.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

**ITCH POWDER.**



Gee whiz! What fun you can have with this stuff. Moisten the tip of your finger, tap it on the contents of the box, and a little bit will stick. Then shake hands with your friend, or drop a speck down his back. In a minute he will feel as if he had the seven years' itch. It

will make him scratch, roar, squirm and make faces. But it is perfectly harmless, as it is made from the seeds of wild roses. The horrible itch stops in a few minutes, or can be checked immediately by rubbing the spot with a wet cloth. While it is working, you will be apt to laugh your suspender buttons off. The best joke of all. Price 10 cents a box, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**COMICAL RUBBER STAMPS.**

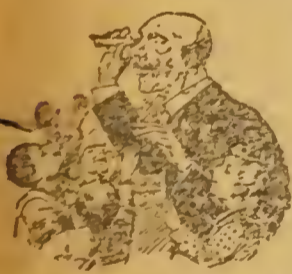


A complete set of five grotesque little people made of indestructible rubber mounted on black walnut blocks. The figures consist of Policeman, Chinaman, and other laughable figures as shown in pictures. As each figure is mounted on a separate block, any boy can set up a regular parade or circus by printing the figures in different

positions. With each set of figures we send a bottle of colored ink, an ink pad and full instructions. Children can stamp these pictures on their toys, picture books, writing paper and envelopes, and they are without doubt the most amusing and entertaining novelty gotten up in years. Price of the complete set of Rubber Stamps, with ink and ink pad, only 10c., 3 sets for 25c., one dozen 90c., by mail postpaid.

L. Senarens, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

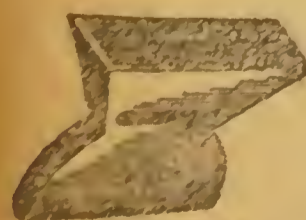
**JUMPING TELESCOPE.**



This is an oblong tube in exact imitation of a telescope. By looking through it, reveals one highly magnified picture of a dancer or other subject. It contains on the side a button, which the victim is told to press for a change of picture. Instead of another picture appearing, the entire inside part shoots out, as shown in illustration. It is entirely harmless, but gives the victim a genuine scare.

Price, 15c. each; 2 for 25c. by mail, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**THE FLUTOPHONE.**



A new musical instrument, producing the sweetest dulcet tones of the flute. The upper part of the instrument is placed in the mouth, the lips covering the openings in the centre. Then by blowing gently upon it you can play

any tune desired as easily as whistling. But little practice is required to become a finished player. It is made entirely of metal, and will last a lifetime. We send full instructions with each instrument. Price, 15c., or 2 for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

A. A. WARFORD, 16 Hart St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

**Sure Fire Accuracy Penetration**  
**The World's Record Holders**  
*Remington-UMC .22 cal. cartridges have broken two records in two years.*

The present world's 100-shot gallery record, 2484 ex 2500, held by Arthur Flubalek was made with these hard hitting .22's.

They will help you, too, to break your best shooting records.

*Remington-UMC .22's are made, too, with hollow point bullets. This increases their shocking and killing power.*

**Remington-UMC—the perfect shooting combination**

REMINGTON ARMS-UNION METALLIC CARTRIDGE CO. 299 Broadway New York City

**VENTRILOQUISM**

Almost anyone can learn it at home. Small cost. Send to-day 2-cent stamp for particulars and proof. O. A. SMITH, Room D66 -822 Bigelow St., Peoria, Ill.

**WEIRD & NOBBY 15c**

This Skull & Crossbones Ring. sil. Looks well, wears well and pleases. Draws attention everywhere. Price only 15c or 2 for 25c; worth more. Wholesale: 12 for \$1.00. Big seller. W. E. HILLPOT, Frenchtown, N. J.

**FREE** A FINE \$1.25 WATCH FOR SELLING 12 packages of BURAKE Foot Powder. We trust you—send for 12 packages and earn the watch or 100 other presents, catalogue sent FREE. H. LATZ & CO., Atlantic City, N. J.

**CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.**

The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**Ayvad's Water-Wings**

**Learn to swim by one trial**

Price 25 cents, Postpaid

These water-wings take up no more room than a pocket-bankerchief. They weigh 3 ounces and support from 50 to 250 pounds. With a pair anyone can learn to swim or float. For use, you have only to wet them, blow them up, and press together the two ring marks under the mouthpiece.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

**RARE POSTAGE STAMPS**

Our packages are the best, as each contains at least 2 rare ones, worth the price of the whole lot. Start a collection. In time it will grow very valuable. Every known variety of foreign and domestic stamps in these packages. Fifty varieties for 5 cents; one hundred 10 cents; two hundred, 20 cents; three hundred, 35 cents; five hundred, \$1.25; one thousand, \$2.25; two thousand, \$18.00; 1,000 mixed lot, 25 cents. All in good condition and worth twice the amount we ask.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**JAPANESE WATER FLOWERS**

Without exception, the most beautiful and interesting things on the market. They consist of a dozen dried-up sprigs, neatly encased in handsomely decorated envelopes, just as they are imported from Japan. Place one sprig in a bowl of water, and it begins to exude into various shapes of exquisite flowers. They are of all colors of the rainbow. It is very amusing to watch them take form.

Small size, price 5 cents; large size, 10 cents a package, by mail, postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

**JAPANESE TRICK KNIFE.**

You can show the knife and instantly draw it across your finger, apparently cutting deep into the flesh. The red blood appears on the blade of the knife, giving a startling effect to the spectators. The knife is removed and the finger is found in good condition. Quite an effective illusion. Price 10c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**SEE-SAW PUZZLE.**

The most absorbing puzzle seen for years. The kind you sit up half the night to do. The puzzle is to get both balls, one in each pocket. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

**SURPRISE KINEMATOGRAPH.**

The greatest hit of the season! It consists of a small metal, nicked tube, with a lens eye view, which shows a pretty ballet girl in tights. Hand it to a friend, who will be delighted with the first picture; tell him to turn the screw in center of instrument to change the views, when a stream of water squirts into his face, much to his disgust. Anyone who has not seen this kinematograph in operation is sure to be caught every time. The instrument can be refilled with water in an instant, ready for the next customer. Price 25c. by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**TRICK FAN.**

A lady's fan made of colored silk cloth. The fan may be used and then shut, and when it opens again, it falls in pieces; shut and open again and it is perfect, without a sign of a break. A great surprise for those not in the trick. Price, 35c. by mail, postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

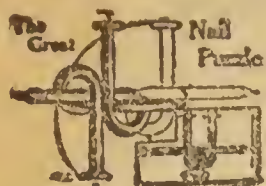


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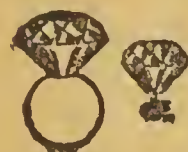
**ROUGH RIDER DISC PISTOLS.**



Made of nicely colored wood 5 1/2 inches long. The power is furnished by rubber bands. Ten discs of cardboard with each pistol. Price, 6c. each, postpaid.

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H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

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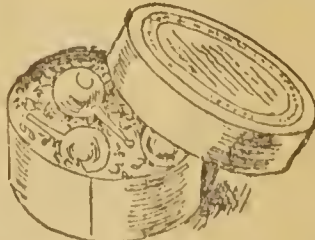
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WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

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J. KENNEDY, 303 West 127th St., N. Y.

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If you shoot a man with this "gun" he will be too mad to accept the ancient excuse—"I didn't know it was loaded." It loads easily with a full charge of water, and taking aim, press the rubber bulb at the butt of the Pistol, when a small stream of water is squirted into his face. The best thing to do then is to pocket your gun and run. There are "loads of fun" in this wicked little joker, which looks like a real revolver, trigger, cock, chambers, barrel and all. Price only 7c.; 4 for 25c.; one dozen 60c. by mail postpaid.

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